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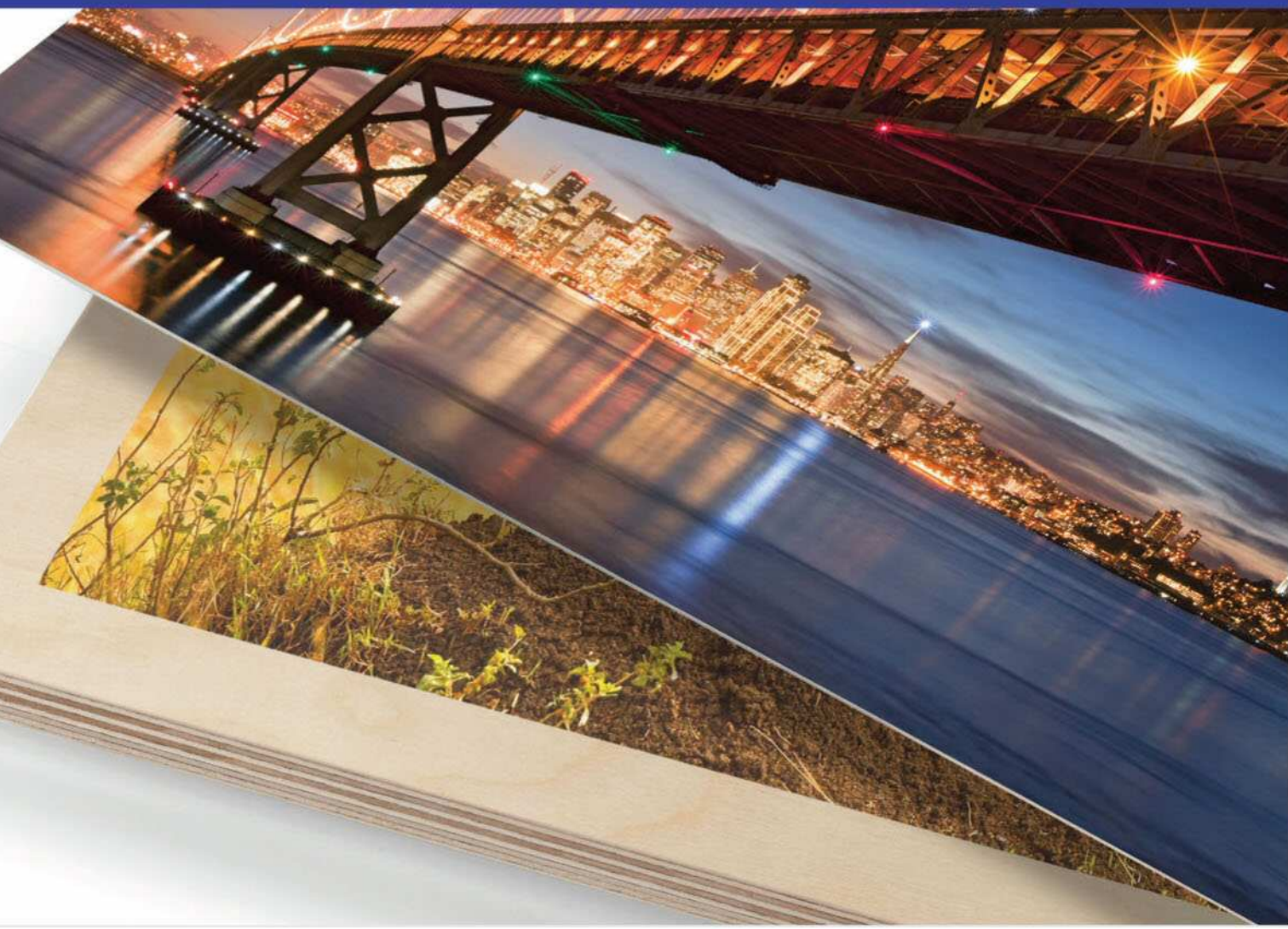

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2 Einstein™ E640s	Full Power	1280 Ws	3.5 sec.	8.86 sec.	10.13 sec.
3 Einstein™ E640s	Full Power	1920 Ws	5.3 sec.	13.0 sec.	15.8 sec.
4 Einstein™ E640s	Full Power	2560 Ws	7.2 sec.	15.9 sec.	19.2 sec.
4 Einstein™ E640s	Half Power	1280 Ws	3.3 sec.		
1 AlienBees™ B1600	Full Power	640 Ws	2.0 sec.	4.13 sec.	4.4 sec.
2 AlienBees™ B1600s 2 AlienBees™ B800s	Full Power	1920 Ws	5.27 sec.	14.1 sec.	14.4 sec.

Flash Unit Models	Output Setting	Total WS	POWERED BY VLX™		
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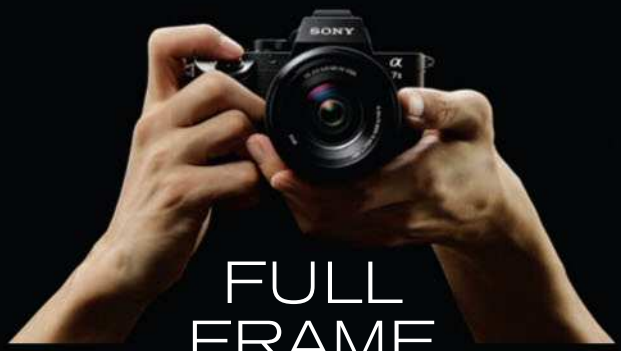

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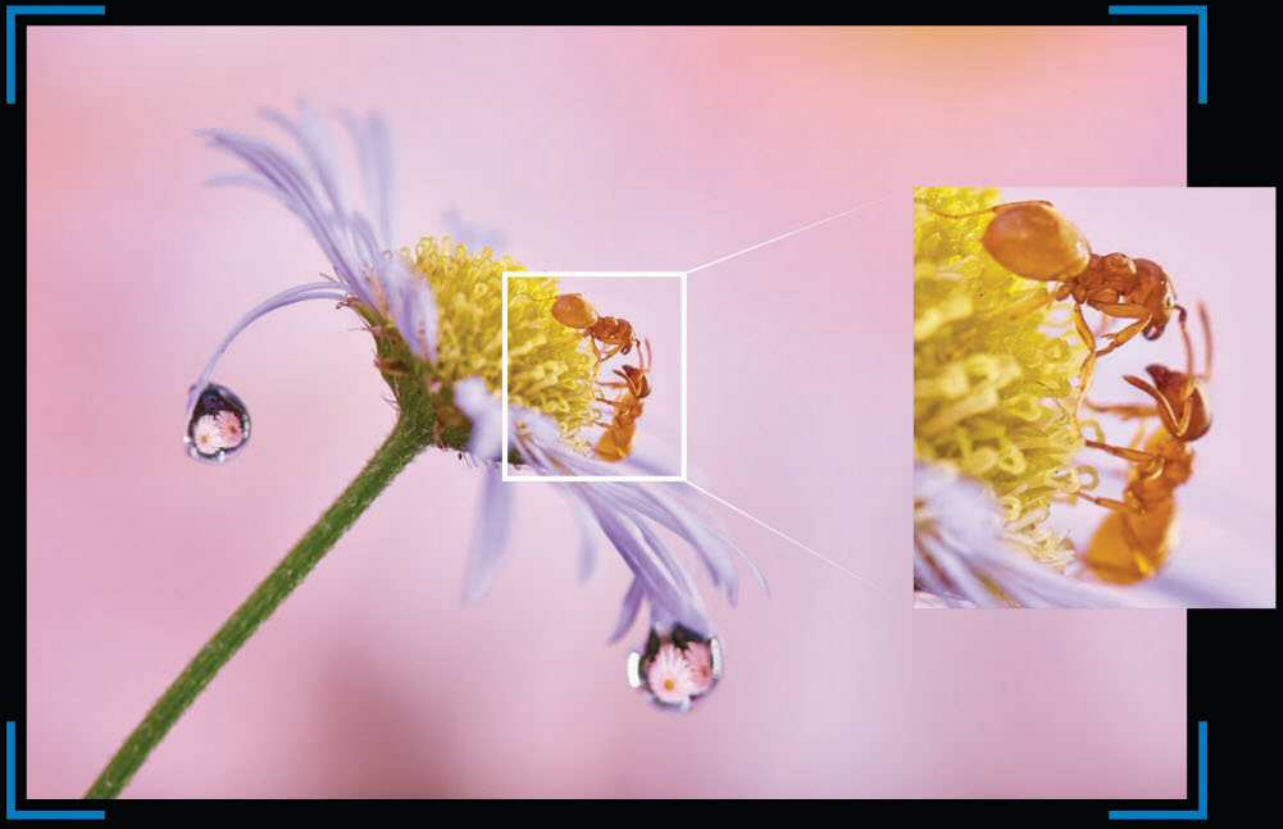
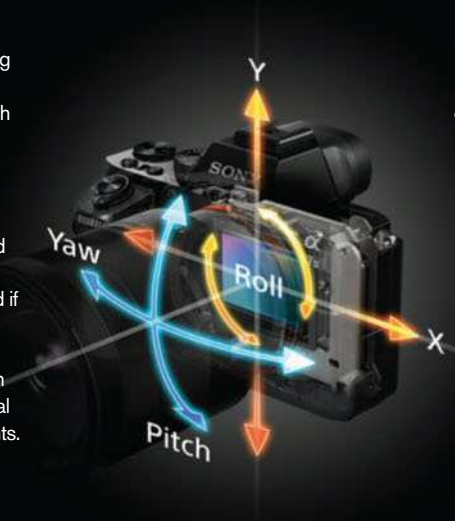


With built-in 5-Axis Stabilization, the remarkable full-frame Sony α7II makes every mountable lens in your arsenal a stabilized lens to let you chase down the subject rather than your tripod

Image stabilization has empowered more nature photographers to get sharp, inspiring photos by freeing us from the bulky tether of a tripod. In the full-frame α7 II, Sony has taken stabilization to the next level with the most advanced technology currently available, a revolutionary 5-Axis Stabilization system.

In the field, photo opportunities like the one in this macro photo are fleeting. These ants didn't pause and wait for their close-up. Being able to work handheld and adjust your position to follow the action is critical, especially with macro subjects like this. But it's no good if the image is blurry. The 5-Axis Stabilization system built into the Sony α7 II gives you the freedom to move and shoot handheld at shutter speeds that would have been impossible without it. The system accounts for horizontal and vertical shift, as well as roll, pitch and yaw movements. The full-frame α7 II image sensor physically moves to counteract camera shake and keep these ants and the flower tack sharp. And because 5-Axis Stabilization is built into the camera, any lens that's mountable to the α7 II is stabilized*.



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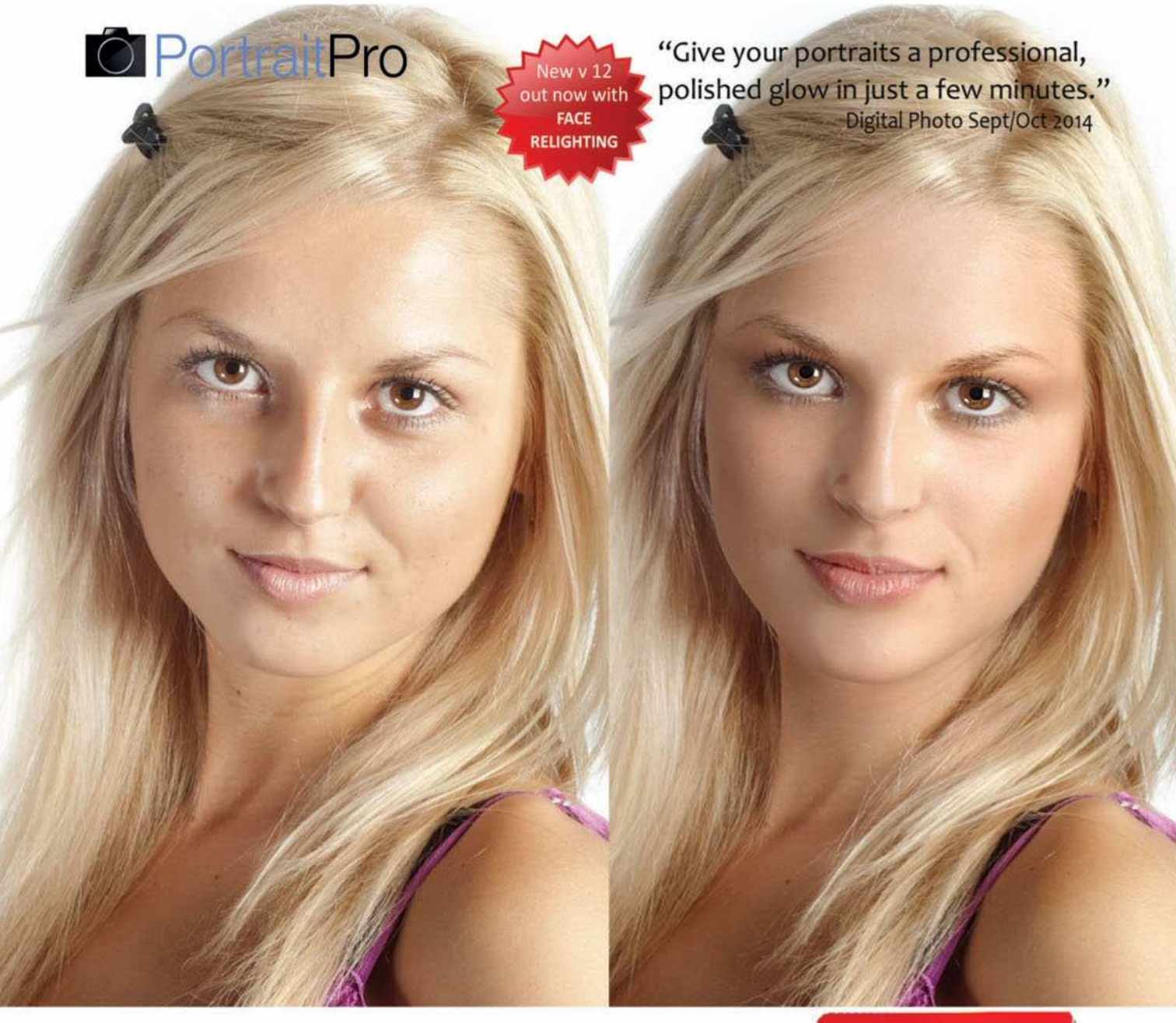

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CAPTURE AUTHENTIC FAMILY PORTRAITS BY FINDING THE BEAUTY IN EASILY MISSED MOMENTS

TEXT & PHOTOGRAPHY BY TRACEY CLARK

A Parent's Perspective

ABOVE: Deep in conversation at the dining room table, I noticed my daughter's reflection on the table's surface. My initial intention was to capture that reflection, but once I had my camera out, the laughter began, which quickly became my primary focus. Setting my camera on the table and shooting nearly blind from that perspective enabled me to continue to interact with my daughter while at the same time releasing the shutter, capturing a handful of natural and authentic portraits of her just being her.

I began my career as a portrait photographer before my career as a parent, but even then, children were always my favorite subject. To me, everything about children is poetic, and using my camera to frame each lilting and lyrical detail is what ignited my interest and fueled my passion to cultivate a career in photography.

I reveled in capturing the little things that delighted me about my tiny subjects: soft, gentle curves, plump parts, smooth skin and wispy hair. As I began to have my own children—two very photogenic daughters—my take on children's portraiture evolved. Seeing things as not "just" a photographer anymore, I began to see my subjects through the lens of motherhood, which was a more multifaceted perspective. I began to notice, with a greater appreciation, the entire story behind each child, which also included scraped knees, untied shoelaces and bedhead.

Because I was living, day in and day out, with my own young children, I experienced, witnessed and appreciated each fleeting phase of childhood, from big milestones to small moments. I recognized the importance of all of it, and through the parenthood lens, everything became photo-worthy.

What I saw as important and even beautiful were so many moments I hadn't noticed before. All of these things began to catch the interest of my camera lens and a new idea of portraiture came into focus. Capturing authentic portraits of my own children helped me to do the same for my clients, and somehow, the work itself became more creative, fun and satisfying. Although there aren't real rules to follow when capturing portraits in this way, there are plenty of tips and tricks and things to look for as you shoot through a parent's perspective.

ABOVE: Unplanned portraits can often be the best portraits of all. When my girls were young, they loved playing dress up. In this case, my daughter was likely about to invite me to a tea party when she sat down on the staircase. From where I sat, I noticed the light that illuminated her beautifully. I asked her to wait there for a quick moment while I shot this portrait. Although she wasn't thrilled with the waiting, she humored me with this adorable (yet somewhat mischievous) little smirk, which, along with her costume and accessories, tells the story of the moment perfectly!

LET KIDS BE KIDS

I recall my own father sitting me on a rocking chair, insisting I sit still in order to capture pictures of me. I, too, would use

This issue is dedicated to the fine art of portraiture. We humans are arguably the most difficult subject to photograph—the only subject that's fully aware of what's happening, and that awareness directly affects how we play to the camera, for better or worse.

There's so much more to it than simply lighting and exposing correctly. Photographer Helmut Newton is quoted, observing, "My job as a portrait photographer is to seduce, amuse and entertain." This is especially true when photographing children, who are as cooperative or unruly as their shifting moods decide. Introducing and maintaining a spirit of play is one of the best ways to help children relax and enjoy a portrait session. This is one of the many tips that photographer Shannon Sewell—whose portfolio of child portraiture overflows with imagination and personality—shares with us in her article "Child's Play."

Of course, not all portraits are created; some just happen. Candid portraits can present themselves suddenly at anytime, and you have to be ready for them. Everyday moments with family can lead to some of your most memorable, beloved images, as we learn in Tracey Clark's "A Parent's Perspective." The opening image of this article is a perfect example, the opportunity presenting itself during a casual conversation with her daughter, and resulting in "natural and authentic portraits of her just being her."

Creating the perfect light for portrait work is easier than you may think. William Sawalich walks us through the basics of creating flattering portrait light in his article "Lighting For Skin Tones." We also look at key lighting equipment and other gear for setting up a studio environment just about anywhere in this issue's "Toolbox."

Great portrait light doesn't necessarily require any special equipment or setups, though. Me Ra Koh identifies seven places to find fantastic portrait light at home in "Indoor Light Portraits." Among her best tips is to become aware of places and times of day when beautiful light occurs naturally in your home.

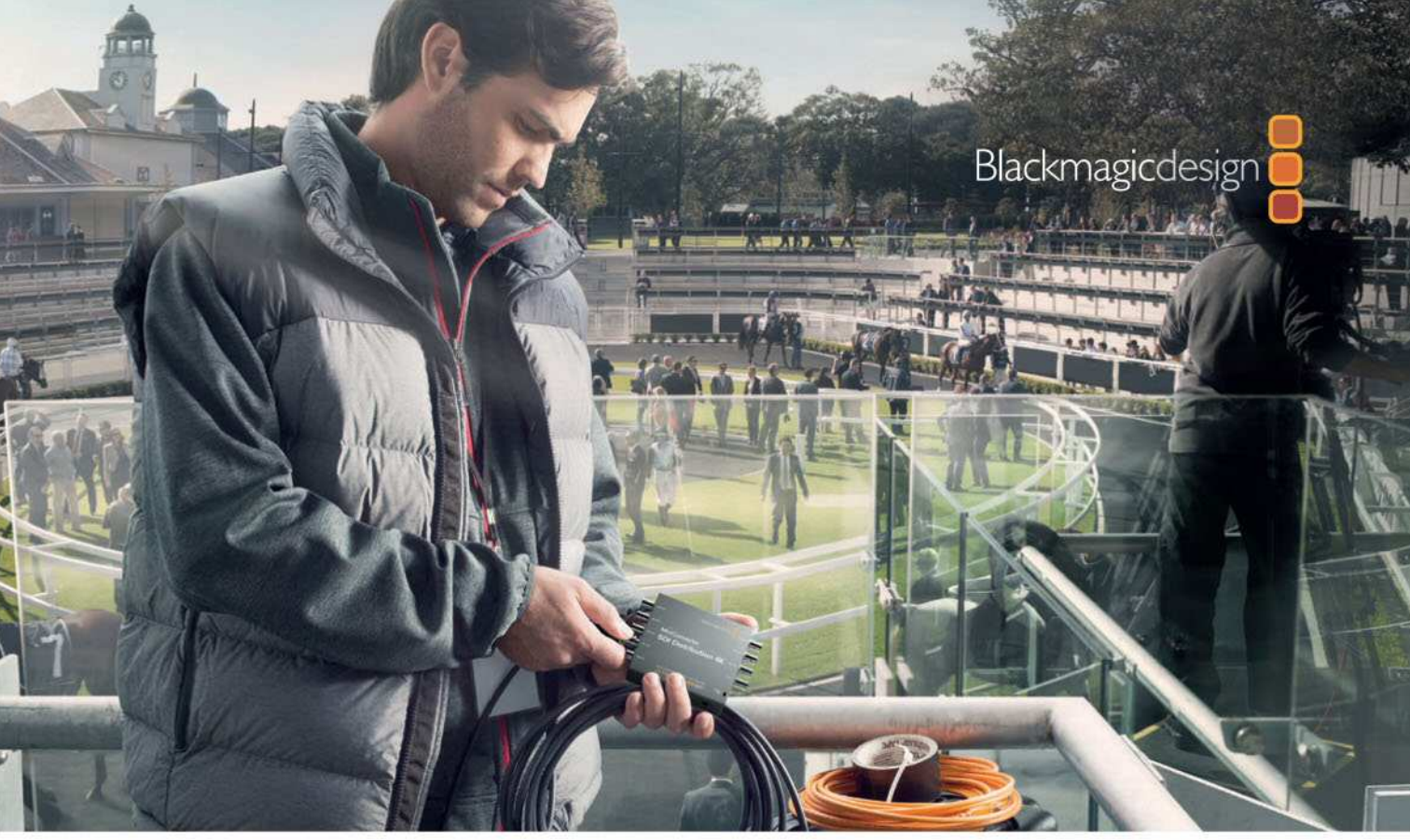
This issue also features our guide to the top portrait processing apps, as well as techniques for retouching manually in Photoshop. We also cover suggested lenses that are ideal for portraiture, plus a primer on lens effects and other tricks you can use to create complementary portrait backgrounds.

We hope you'll find a lot of inspiration and practical know-how in this issue to help you make portraits that both you and your subjects will love. We also encourage you to submit your best portraiture to our new People & Portraits Photo Contest. Visit **dpmag.com/peopleandportraits** to enter.

—Wes Pitts, Editor

ON THE COVER

Featured on the cover is "The Ignorant & The Blissful" by Sreeranj Sreedhar. Taken at Jal Mahal in Jaipur, Rajasthan, India, the image is a finalist in our 8th Annual Your Best Shot Photo Contest. The winning photos are featured in this issue's "View." See all of the finalists on our website: dpmag.com/photo-contests/8th-annual-your-best-shot/finalists.



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SHOT CONTEST WINNERS

Photo Contest. Featured here are the First, Second and Third Place winners. Check out

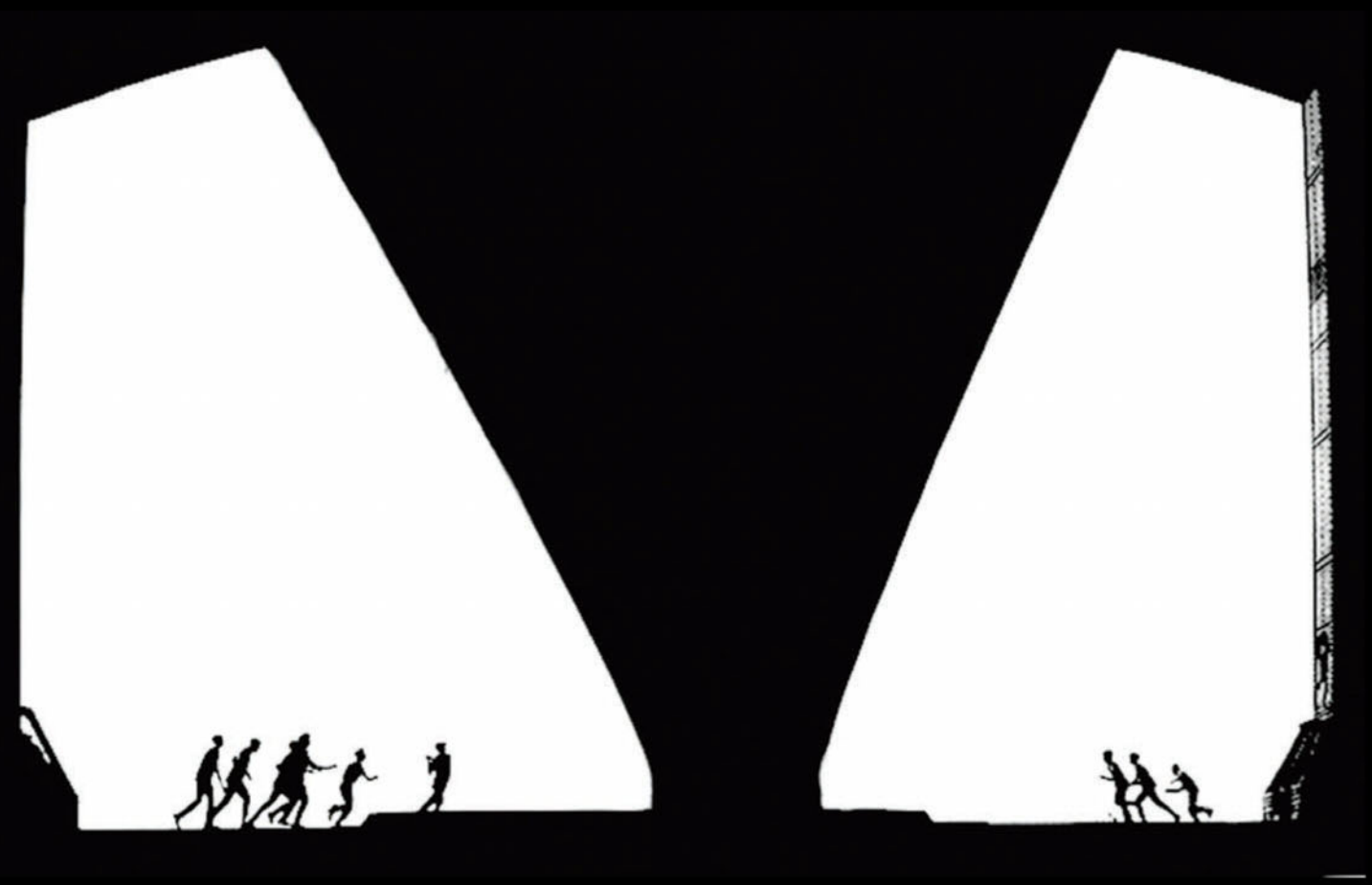
FIRST PLACE

"WALL PAINTER"

BY KEN RICE

This photo is one of my favorites of the year because it's so colorful and includes a human element," says Ken Rice. "It was taken in Houston, Texas, on a brilliant spring day on May 1, 2014—May Day, typically a color-filled day. The Lower Westheimer area of Houston is an eclectic neighborhood located on the edge of the Museum District. It's a melting pot of the finest restaurants in Houston intermingled with tattoo shops, boutique clothing stores and multicultural residential units. I live in the area and always carry my camera to ensure I don't miss one of the many interesting photo opportunities that arise regularly. This is a photo of a boutique store preparing for a new opening. The wall had previously been painted a drab gray. As I drove by, I was surprised to see such color where previously there had been a nondescript, plain parking lot. Even more delightful—the "Wall Painter" was still busy refining his work of art. I quickly parked down the street, grabbed my camera and took several shots of the wall and painter."

Leica M Typ 240, Leica 50mm ƒ/1.4 Summilux-M



SECOND PLACE

"THE BRIDGE"

BY DAVID CAMHI

"On a summer day in New York City," remembers David Camhi, "I decided to visit one of the local parks in Queens. While there, I noticed a number of boys gleefully playing underneath the bridge. I asked them to split up on either side of the span, and at my signal, to run toward each other. The boys were most happy to comply."

THIRD PLACE

"JOURNEY TO THE OTHER SIDE"

BY DAVID SHIELD

"Recently, I've become very excited about the thought of attempting Milky Way photography," explains David Shield, "so I decided to plan a night shoot in Yosemite National Park at the end of June during a new moon phase. My original plan was to photograph a panoramic image at Glacier Point featuring the Milky Way and post-sunset light. After photographing the Milky Way, I started to envision what my image would look like if I blended in the following morning's sunrise light instead, so I decided to wait around and photograph the sun just as it rose above Half Dome. My new plan was to capture the sun rays as they illuminated the foreground trees, hoping this would add a dynamic light feature to my final image. It ended up being a very long night, and some extra time was required in postprocessing, but I loved every minute of the experience."

Nikon D610, Rokinon 14mm ƒ/2.8, Gitzo tripod, Vanguard ballhead, cable release

Next

CANON EF 100-400MM ƒ/4.5-5.6L IS II USM

Canon has redesigned their compact super-telephoto zoom lens. Fully compatible with all EOS cameras, the **EF 100-400mm ƒ/4.5-5.6L IS II USM lens** now utilizes a rotation zoom ring for exact adjustments and weight balance instead of the previous model's push-pull zoom. With this is an improved zoom torque adjustment ring for personalizing zoom tension settings. With a redesigned set of optics, including one Fluorite and one Super UD lens element for increased sharpness and contrast, the lens now has three Image Stabilizing modes—standard, panning and during exposure only. The optical IS now provides four shutter speed steps of correction, increased from the previous 1.5 steps. The magnesium housing is dust and water resistant, allowing for use in even harsh rainforest environments. The lens includes the ET-83D lens hood, which features a side window that allows for filter adjustment while keeping the hood in place. List Price: $2,199. **Contact:** Canon, www.usa.canon.com.

SONY ACTION CAM

Sony has stepped into the ring with GoPro, announcing its own POV 4K action cam. The compact **FDR-X1000V** shoots 4K for playback on a 4K TV through HDMI, full HD video at 120p and standard HD at 240p to capture slow-motion shots. The Zeiss Tessar lens has an ultra-wide 170-degree field of view. The camera also features a back-illuminated Exmor R CMOS sensor and BIONZ X processor. Updated Steady Shot technology with electronic image stabilization provides vibration-free footage for quick action and aerial shots. The FDR-X1000V has added wind noise reduction to decrease interference with the stereo microphone. Manual controls include white balance, auto exposure shifting, loop recording and burst still-image shooting. The camera is also compatible with the UStream platform. An RM-LVR2 LCD Live View Remote is waterproof up to 10 feet for frame check, record start/stop, playback and file deletion. A Highlight Movie Maker feature automatically edits together a short MP4 highlight reel for quick sharing. The official Sony Action Cam app will be released in Spring 2015. List Price: $500 (with waterproof case); $600 (with waterproof case and RM-LVR2). **Contact:** Sony, www.store.sony.com.

MULE GOPRO MOUNT

The **Mule GoPro mount** tagline is, "One is good. Mule is better." It alludes to the Mule's finesse in mounting two GoPro cameras using one slim tool. Compatible with GoPro third-party mounts and GoPro pivot arms, two cameras can be positioned at different angles in multiple directions providing integrated footage for fluid editing and continuous storytelling. The Mule can be set up on scuba equipment, surfboards, race cars, zip lines or even used handheld. List Price: $19. **Contact:** Mule MFG, www.mulemfg.com.

check out www.dpmag.com/next for more info

ARIES BLACKBIRD X10 CAMERA DRONE

The **Aries Blackbird X10 camera drone** provides six axis gyrostabilization and GPS accuracy for its 16 megapixel still and 1080/30 fps full HD video onboard camera. The weather protected body integrates a 2.4GHz WiFi connection for advanced control via an Android/iOS mobile app. The mobile device can be secured directly to the controller, while the app allows you to dictate start/stop video recording, still shooting, lens field of view and more. The Aries Repeater (shipped with the Blackbird X10) increases the WiFi communication distance up to 1,000 feet when needed. The ergonomic grip controls climb, descend, roll and pitch. If there's a loss of control, the GPS-guided system hovers, maintaining height and position. If transmitter signal is lost, the automatic Flight Control system pilots the quadcopter to a safe height and lands safely at its starting point. The easily accessible 5300mAh lithium battery system provides 25 minutes of flight time on a single charge, with audio and visual alerts when the battery is running low. Estimated Street Price: $799. **Contact:** Adorama, www.adorama.com.

RUGGED HARD DRIVE

Travel photographers will want to take note of the new rugged drive solutions offered by **G-Technology**. The **G-Drive ev RaW with Rugged Bumper** is a USB 3.0 bus-powered drive. Not only is it 35 percent lighter than the original G-Drive ev, the 1 TB capacity drive can survive a 1.5-meter drop. G-Tech has also developed an **All-Terrain Case (ATC)**. Removable and compatible with the Evolution Series G-Drive ev or G-Drive ev SSD, it can be purchased with the G-Drive ev RaW drive, as well. When tethered to the removable drive, the ATC case protects the drive from drops up to two meters and has a watertight compartment that ensures the drive floats when dropped in water. The case additionally protects from pressure, shock, water and dust. List Price: $99 (G-Drive ev RaW 500 GB); $129 (G-Drive ev RaW 1 TB); $229 (G-Drive ev ATC with Thunderbolt 1 TB); $179 (G-Drive ev ATC with USB 3.0 1 TB); $129 (ATC with Thunderbolt); $79 (ATC with USB 3.0). **Contact:** G-Technology, www.g-technology.com.

SMALL-IN-ONE PRINTER

Incorporating **Epson**'s MicroPiezo technology and six-color Claria Photo HD inks, the newly announced **Expression Photo XP-860 Small-in-One printer** is a small but powerful device for your workflow. With Ethernet, built-in WiFi and Epson Connect technology, it can print up to 8x10 borderless images from your smartphone, tablet or computer from any location worldwide. The printer also includes USB and memory card slots for computer-less prints. The 4.3-inch LCD touch screen makes it easy to navigate. Images can also be edited, scanned and shared directly to Facebook and cloud services. The Expression Photo XP-860 is ENERGY STAR certified, supports recycled paper and is designed to be recycled. List Price: $299. **Contact:** Epson, www.epson.com.

New York Institute of Photography

TRAVEL AND PHOTOJOURNALISM COURSES

The **New York Institute of Photography** has launched several new online photo-learning courses. The **Travel Photography Course** covers topics such as what gear is needed for different types of trips, technique for landscape, nature, wildlife, portrait and architecture photography, as well as business skills and portfolio creation. The **Photojournalism Course** focuses on visual narrative storytelling, as well as necessary business skills and portfolio preparation. These courses are built for photographers of all levels via the NYIP online learning platform where you can learn at your own pace. Each student is also paired with a professional mentor for individual skill development. List Price: $999 (discounts applied when paid in full at time of enrollment). **Contact:** NYIP, www.nyip.edu.

Next

NIKKOR 300MM ƒ/4E PF ED VR

Nikon has developed a travel-friendly **AF-S Nikkor 300mm ƒ/4E PF ED VR lens** that's 30 percent shorter and 1.5 pounds lighter than its predecessor. This size and weight reduction is due in large part to Phase Fresnel optical technology that also contributes to a correction in chromatic aberration. The lens utilizes 4.5 stops of Vibration Reduction for sharp images when handheld with additional VR modes for Sports & Action and Tripod Detection. Extra-low dispersion glass has a Nano Crystal Coating to prevent ghosting and flare, as well as a fluorine coating to repel dust, water, grease and dirt. New electromagnetic aperture control adds precision to continuous shooting. Silent Wave Motor offers quiet AF operation with quick manual override from a focus ring spin. List Price: $1,999. **Contact:** Nikon, www.nikonusa.com.

SEAGATE SEVEN

Seagate chose the name **Seven** for its ultra-portable 500GB hard drive because of its incredibly slender seven-millimeter thickness. But don't let "slim" make you think "unprotected." The 100 percent stainless-steel enclosure safeguards data from drops and shock. The drive is BUS powered and connected through a single micro-USB 3.0. List Price: $99. **Contact:** Seagate, www.seagate.com.

PROFESSIONAL WORKFLOW

Lexar has expanded its Professional Workflow line with the four-bay dual-port **Thunderbolt 2 reader hub (HR2)**, which provides four times the speed of the USB 3.0 reader hub (HR1). The HR2 is fully backward compatible with the first generation of Thunderbolt and USB 2.0. For added flexibility, in addition to working with the previous SDHC/SDXC, CompactFlash and XQD readers, Lexar has designed a **CFast 2.0 Thunderbolt 2 Reader** that can be used individually or with the hub. Lexar has also introduced **256 GB** and **512 GB storage drives** that work with the hub for simultaneously downloading assets to the drive and your computer. The hub and readers/drives are sold separately for complete system personalization. List Price: $199 (HR2 hub); $99 (CFast 2.0 Reader); $139 (256 GB drive); $199 (512 GB drive). **Contact:** Lexar, www.lexar.com/workflow.

LIGHTING MODIFIERS

Manfrotto has launched a new collection of lighting modifiers. Available in multiple sizes, the lightweight Softboxes have been designed specifically for easy setup and can be used on or off camera. The Duo Umbrella utilizes translucent white fabric and a removable black back cover for shoot-through and bounce-light abilities. The Softboxes and the Duo Umbrella are collapsible and come with a case. The Magnetic Background Mount uses neodymium magnets to securely attach any steel-rimmed collapsible background to a lightweight stand for quick, versatile shoots. The triple-stitched triangular and circular Reflectors and Diffusers control light in any situation. Highly portable, they collapse to ⅓ their original size and come with a carrying case. List Price: $68-$324 (Softboxes); $56 (Duo Umbrella); $194 (Magnetic Background Mount Kit); $43-$124 (Reflectors & Diffusers). **Contact:** Manfrotto, www.manfrotto.us.

MECABLITZ 26 AF-1

Despite its compact pocket size, the new **Metz Mecablitz 26 AF-1 digital** boasts a guide number of 26 for ISO 100/21 degrees at 85mm. It also features LED function keys and display, making it simple to read and operate. The smart design enables the reflector to be rotated for an indirect flash, and there's also an integrated wide-angle diffuser. It's also great for shooting video—a two-level adjustable high-output LED continuous light setting provides up to 30 lux of output for motion work. Available in versions for Canon, Nikon, Olympus/Panasonic/Leica, Samsung, Pentax, Fujifilm and Sony. List Price: $129. **Contact:** Metz, www.metz.us.

FUJIFILM XF 16-55MM ƒ/2.8 R LM WR

Fujifilm's new wide angle to portrait length lens is built to withstand harsh conditions. At a 24 84mm equivalent length for a 35mm camera, the **XF 16-55mm ƒ/2.8 R LM WR lens** is compatible with all X mount mirrorless cameras. With 14 weather seals for moisture and dust, the lens can withstand temperatures as low as 14 degrees F. Seventeen lens elements are distributed in 12 groups, with three extra low dispersion elements for controlling chromatic aberration and three aspherical elements to reduce distortion through zoom. A Nano GI coating is used to minimize surface reflections and prevent lens flares and ghosting. Its Twin Linear Motor autofocus system is quick and near silent, which is particularly useful for video work. Estimated Street Price: $1,999. **Contact:** Fujifilm, www.fujifilmusa.com.

MULTIBLITZ V6 LED LIGHT

Multiblitz has released a new low power-consumption, continuous **V6 LED light** for photo and video work both indoors and outside. At a lightweight three pounds, the V6 LED puts out 2200 lux at a six-foot distance with the FILNOS standard reflector (6,000 lumens) at full power while providing 50,000 hours of lifetime usage. The 4000K color balance shifts slightly warm to flatter skin tones. The V6 LED light includes a multi-voltage supply unit that continuously dims light output over a 2.5 ƒ-stop range. Compatible with P-type modifiers and PROPAC battery packs. List Price: $799. **Contact:** Multiblitz, www.multiblitzusa.com.

People & PORTRAITS

Whether formal or fun, created or candid, submit your best portrait photography to our People & Portraits photo contest for your chance to win prizes and get published in *Digital Photo* magazine.

2015 PHOTO CONTEST

dpmag.com/peopleandportraits

Notes From The Field

Some Photos Wait For You

OTHERS TAKE A BIT OF EFFORT | BY BRUCE DALE

Some portraits sit there waiting to be photographed. I once shot only one frame of a man on a street corner in China that ran on the cover of *National Geographic*'s March 1980 issue. That was rare. Others take more effort, as you shall see.

The Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad operating out of Chama, New Mexico, is a great place to photograph antique steam locomotives still in operation. The old station and switch area in town is rich with photo ops and has easy access for photography. (Some other railroads I've visited are cordoned off with fences, making photography difficult.) During the operating season, the T&C makes daily 64-mile runs to the city of Antonito in Colorado and offers numerous places along the highway to incorporate the train in a scenic setting. I've ridden the train end to end several times. It's a great and worthwhile trip, and I've made some nice photos from onboard, but a train is much easier to photograph as part of a scene.

The railway has a rich movie history, with a list of actors including Gregory Peck, Marlon Brando, Harrison Ford,

Kevin Costner, Gene Hackman, Sean Connery, Willie Nelson, Robert Mitchum and Rock Hudson. Candice Bergen and Stockard Channing were the only women I recognized. Don't know why, except I guess there aren't that many cowgirl movies. My favorite star at Chama is Tom Garcia, who you'll meet below.

While watching one of the engines being shuttled along the tracks back to a maintenance shed, I noticed an interesting face at the driver's window and tried a couple of unsuccessful shots from the ground. Then, I decided to introduce myself to the driver. I got lucky and met Tom Garcia, not an engineer, but a machinist who helped keep the locomotives running. Tom allowed me to photograph him inside the cab while I tried a variety of angles of him seated at the window and at the controls, but none were working out. The lighting was harsh and my pictures seemed full of distractions. Still unsatisfied, I waited till he left the engine and decided to try and photograph him alongside and in the shade of the relatively small 62-ton locomotive once owned by Gene Autry, a 1950s movie cowboy. I remember a composition battle in my mind. Should I have the engine number 463 prominent in the foreground on the left? Or, should I place Tom in the foreground with the bold graphic Rio Grande railroad name in the background on the right? The graphics painted on the side of this iron horse might tell the story a little better. I was trying both angles when wafts of steam rose up unexpectedly. This was the "serendipitous" moment that I always look for and added the extra element that gave the photo more feeling.

I made several later trips to Chama, always bringing along extra prints for Tom. I photographed him again—once inside the shop, seated on the front of the engine, and another time with some welding gear. One of the trips was during a splendiferous autumn season. I studied the railroad schedule, scouted out the route, and I was rewarded with a nice panorama of one of the trains passing through the mountains. I'll go back again some day, but before my next trip, I'll do a little research and review some of the old films featuring this railroad to look for vantage points I may have missed. DP

For 30 years, photographer **BRUCE DALE** *worked for* National Geographic *Magazine, which published more than 2,000 of his pictures. An early convert to digital photography, Dale has become an expert on the subject and teaches throughout the country on a regular basis. See more of his work at www.brucedale.com.*

Shooting Back

IN THE ABSENCE OF FACIAL EXPRESSIONS, CONTEXT AND GESTURE MAKE THE PORTRAIT

BY TRACEY CLARK OF SHUTTER SISTERS

When striving to capture truly expressive portraits, focusing on facial expressions may seem like the most effective approach, and it certainly can be. But there are a number of other ways to shoot evocative, emotional images totally void of any facial expressions. As a matter of fact, you don't need to reveal the face of your subject at all to capture a telling portrait of them.

Over the years, I've collected a photographic arsenal full of expressive images of both clients and of my own family that were taken from the back. I never tire of capturing images using this unobtrusive approach. Whether it's a quintessential "walking away" shot, the shape of my subject's silhouette or them gazing out into a sweeping landscape, framing from the back is an unexpected and poignant way to tell a captivating visual story.

There are a number of ways to approach shots like these to use them to your greatest photographic advantage. Start by considering your motivation in shooting from this perspective

and work to meet that motivation in your final product.

LET THEM LEAD

I find that shooting from behind while my subject is walking away from me is one of the least hands-on photographic approaches there is. This can make for an easy job of capturing your subject in an authentic way of just being themselves.

You do need to keep certain camera settings in mind, however. Because they're in motion, you have to move along with your subject—depending on how much space you want to leave around them—so you may need to shoot with a faster shutter speed to minimize potential blur. You have to watch your aperture, as well. Shooting too shallow may mean they walk right past the focal plane.

As far as when to snap your shutter, you'll want to watch for a moment that may speak of your subject. Maybe it's the little skip in a child's step or their hair blowing in the wind that you want to frame just so. Remember, the story relies on body language, gate or other subtle gestures that express the mood of the moment.

CONTEMPLATE CONNECTION

Just because your subject isn't connecting with you directly doesn't mean they're not connected. Shooting from the back can capture the connection between your subject and another subject quite effectively. Whether it's a quiet, tender moment between a father and child, a playful interlude between siblings or even a glimpse into the compassion shared between your subject and their canine companion, the possibilities of capturing connections in this way are endless. Watch for simple movements that evoke caring: A lean, a caress, a tilt of the head or a literal connection like handholding are priceless gestures that are all the more valuable when caught in a photograph.

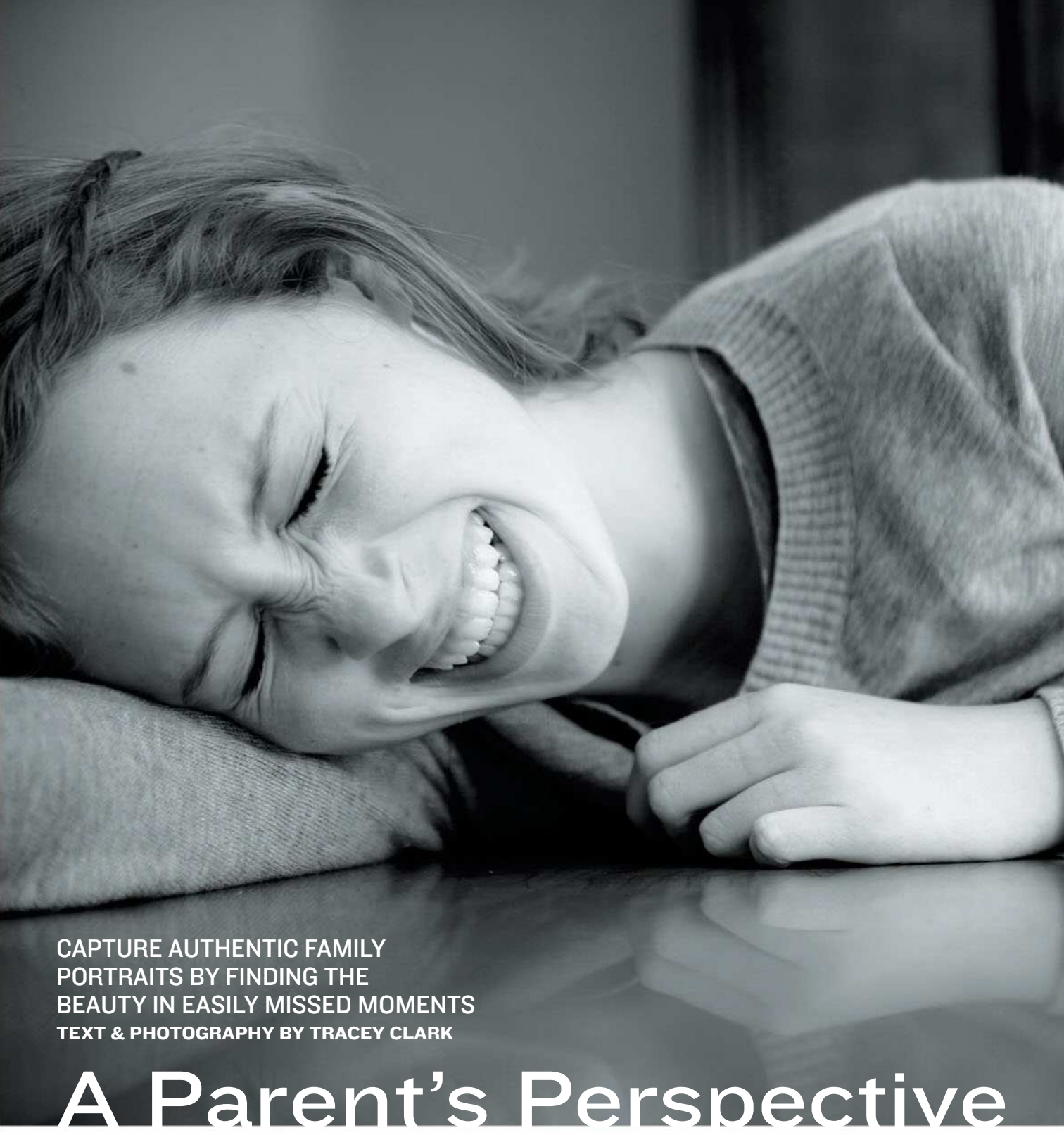
CONSIDER THE CONTEXT

Often, the part of the image that tells most of the story isn't the person at all; it's where the person is being photographed. Shooting subjects in a place that's meaningful to them offers a connection in a different kind of way, and it can give a personal and significant meaning to the portrait. Look at the landscape to help you tell the story. A wooded path to wander, a vast vista to contemplate, a breathtaking beach on a summer's day all offer totally unique backdrops to your portraits.

Shooting from the back means you have to rely on things like your background to give context to the shot. When you add your subject to the backdrop and capture them in motion, in thought, relaxing, skipping or even jumping, you're bound to be translating the expression of that moment.

Props and accessories can also bring context to your portraits—my personal favorite being my kids in their Mickey Mouse ears. It doesn't get better than that! Keeping in mind the backdrop and also getting creative with your composition can help you use apparel to your creative advantage. Whether it's a baseball cap, a beach hat, pigtails, a sports uniform or a formal gown, attire, adornments and other accessories can create a portrait narrative that's as evocative as any facial expression could ever be. DP

TRACEY CLARK *is the founder of Shutter Sisters, a collaborative photo blog and thriving community of female photo enthusiasts, shuttersisters.com. Learn more about Tracey and her work at* ***www.traceyclark.com.***



CAPTURE AUTHENTIC FAMILY PORTRAITS BY FINDING THE BEAUTY IN EASILY MISSED MOMENTS

TEXT & PHOTOGRAPHY BY TRACEY CLARK

A Parent's Perspective

ABOVE: Deep in conversation at the dining room table, I noticed my daughter's reflection on the table's surface. My initial intention was to capture that reflection, but once I had my camera out, the laughter began, which quickly became my primary focus. Setting my camera on the table and shooting nearly blind from that perspective enabled me to continue to interact with my daughter while at the same time releasing the shutter, capturing a handful of natural and authentic portraits of her just being her.

I began my career as a portrait photographer before my career as a parent, but even then, children were always my favorite subject. To me, everything about children is poetic, and using my camera to frame each lilting and lyrical detail is what ignited my interest and fueled my passion to cultivate a career in photography.

I reveled in capturing the little things that delighted me about my tiny subjects: soft, gentle curves, plump parts, smooth skin and wispy hair. As I began to have my own children—two very photogenic daughters—my take on children's portraiture evolved. Seeing things as not "just" a photographer anymore, I began to see my subjects through the lens of motherhood, which was a more multifac-

ABOVE: Unplanned portraits can often be the best portraits of all. When my girls were young, they loved playing dress-up. In this case, my daughter was likely about to invite me to a tea party when she sat down on the staircase. From where I sat, I noticed the light that illuminated her beautifully. I asked her to wait there for a quick moment while I shot this portrait. Although she wasn't thrilled with the waiting, she humored me with this adorable (yet somewhat mischievous) little smirk, which, along with her costume and accessories, tells the story of the moment perfectly!

eted perspective. I began to notice, with a greater appreciation, the entire story behind each child, which also included scraped knees, untied shoelaces and bedhead.

Because I was living, day in and day out, with my own young children, I experienced, witnessed and appreciated each fleeting phase of childhood, from big milestones to small moments. I recognized the importance of all of it, and through the parenthood lens, everything became photo-worthy.

What I saw as important and even beautiful were so many moments I hadn't noticed before. All of these things began to catch the interest of my camera lens and a new idea of portraiture came into focus. Capturing authentic portraits of my own children helped me to do the same for my clients, and somehow, the work itself became more creative, fun and satisfying. Although there aren't real rules to follow when capturing portraits in this way, there are plenty of tips and tricks and things to look for as you shoot through a parent's perspective.

LET KIDS BE KIDS

I recall my own father sitting me on a rocking chair, insisting I sit still in order to capture pictures of me. I, too, would use

this approach in the studio—oh, the variety of chairs found in the studio—but when shooting around my house or out on location, I found it much easier and more photographically productive to just let kids be kids. Giving children the freedom to move around on their own terms allows them to naturally pose themselves, which almost always makes for an authentic and interesting portrait opportunity.

ACCENTUATE ABSURDITIES

Kids are funny. They're expressive, uninhibited, quirky and often messy. Whether it's mismatched socks, extra accessories, face paint—or even their dinner—the things children wear and how they wear them can add layers, literally, to a portrait. Allowing for the absurdities of childhood, no matter how unsightly they may seem, can accentuate both the personality and the essence of your young subjects.

FIND POETRY IN MOTION

Allowing kids to be themselves usually rules out them sitting still for very long, if ever. But there are a million great moments to be frozen in time, right in the midst of motion. You can either use the movement to your advantage, actually allowing for some blur (on purpose), which can lead to an unexpected and even whimsical portrait, or you can stop the motion, capturing an unabashed expression in the midst of a playful moment.

GO WILD

Hair, clothes, props, surroundings can all help to create the story behind the person in your portrait. Traditionally, in portraiture, our subjects are well groomed and coiffed, while our surroundings are serene, as not to take away from the subject at hand. But with children, wild can be wonderful. Consider allowing natural, wild beauty to emerge and frame your subject accordingly. You may be surprised at how beautiful the wild can be.

ABOVE: I've been photographing my children on this beach annually since as long as I can remember. Each year, I attempt portraits of them that reflect something about them that particular year. In this case, with my daughter being really into dance, we shot a number of dancing and jumping shots. So much of this speaks specifically of her and of this place: untamed, wild, expressive, beautiful—all things that speak of this beach and of my free-spirited daughter. The monochromatic conversion makes it artsy and timeless.

GIVE THEM SPACE

Like with any other type of photography, composition can make or break the shot. It can be easy to forego compelling composition in exchange for framing up a traditional head-and-shoulders portrait. But, when you use a little more creativity, compositionally speaking, you can elevate a simple headshot into something much more interesting. Using negative space in an

unexpected way can bring visual interest to your image. Plus, if you leverage the space by allowing for other elements to be included within the frame, it could help you tell a more complete story of your subject.

ANTICIPATE THE EXPRESSION

Instead of chasing your subject around to get the perfect shot (which is totally necessary much of the time), sometimes being more patient and discrete can make your job easier while bringing into view a quintessential portrait. Focusing on your subject, keeping your camera still and just waiting for that moment when he or she lights up the frame with the perfect expression is one of my favorite parent-photographer techniques. Knowing your subject well (like your own children) can help with this approach of anticipation, but even when working with clients, you know that certain things will always entice the most joyful of expressions (bubbles, balloons and sweets, to name a few). You can always use those things to your photographic advantage.

FOCUS ON THE DETAILS

We all have distinct physicalities that are uniquely our own. Why not embrace them and play up those things in a portrait? Whether it's something that's indicative of your subject's life stage (a missing tooth or a new haircut) or just a certain quality or characteristic of the child (a cowlick or freckles), consider capturing something unique and endearing in your portraiture. Just like time, the moments of childhood fly by. Capturing special vignettes like these will make any parent swoon. DP

TRACEY CLARK *is the founder of Shutter Sisters, a collaborative photo blog and thriving community of female photo enthusiasts, shuttersisters.com. Learn more about Tracey and her work at traceyclark.com.*

ABOVE: I know this shot will stand the test of time for being a quintessential portrait of my tween. I can't help but recognize her long, unkempt hair flying free in the wind as a metaphor of her wild, youthful tween spirit. Capturing a shot like this on the beach, this specific beach that means so much to my family, brings an added layer of meaning and metaphor.

LEFT: I don't have my camera laying in wait for every gift my children open, but in the case of this journal that my daughter really wanted, I knew she'd be excited. Even still, I couldn't have anticipated this much excitement! Having my camera at the ready, knowing an expression would come from opening this gift, paid off when I was able to capture this perfect birthday moment of surprise and delight. Every parent's dream!

Indoor Light Portraits

CAPTURING EVERYDAY LIFE WITH BEAUTIFUL LIGHT IN THE HOME

TEXT & PHOTOGRAPHY BY ME RA KOH

Whether you're a beginner or an aspiring pro, do you ever have this sinking feeling that all your photos are starting to look the same? You've taken your clients to the same park two dozen times. You've set your families up in the same poses again and again. The creativity that once seemed endless when you first bought your camera has started to run dry.

Be encouraged! These aren't signs of your creativity running out. Instead, these are symptoms that you're ready for the next level of growth in your photography: capturing everyday life with beautiful light in the home.

Shooting indoors can feel intimidating. Past photo results of blurry subjects and thoughts of needing to buy studio lighting or special equipment may bombard you. But if you know how to find great light in the home and are willing to take your

camera off Auto mode, there's a world of endless stories waiting to be captured.

Finding the best light is often the difference between good and bad photos. Many times, we get frustrated with our photos because our family is blurred. In most cases, this is due to not having enough light. If you're passionate about photography, you want to develop a passion for observing light: noticing the degree of light, how light changes throughout the day, when it softly spills into a room from the window versus when it's almost too bright and harsh.

When we first start taking photos, we often assume the best light is outside. But there are also great spots of light within your home that will give you beautiful results! Be aware of these different spots, and subtly encourage your family to be in them. Or, beforehand, you can set up an activity like a board game or toys in these areas. Turn off your auto flash, and have fun experimenting with these seven everyday spots in your home for great light. Once you find them—success!

To get you started, here are "7 Spots in Your Home for Great Light," taken from my latest best-selling book, *Your Family in Pictures*.

1. WINDOWS

Window light creates some of the most flattering, beautiful soft lighting for photos. Notice the degree of light by looking at the floor. Before setting your family next to the window, take note of how bright the light is right under the window and how far the light stretches before the light's intensity tapers off. Your family doesn't have to necessarily be right under the window, but rather at the distance where the light becomes soft versus harsh.

2. WHITE KITCHEN COUNTERS

I've been known to capture some of my clients' favorite family photos in the kitchen with everyone leaning up against the countertops. The window light bounces off the white countertops, reflecting this beautiful light onto their faces. (And the countertop is a great tool for hiding bodies if parents don't want their whole body in the photo!)

3. SHEER CURTAINS

I get crazy-excited by sheer curtains! They can be the best backdrop to a photo. Their sheer material softens harsh window light, giving an almost softbox look and feel without you having to invest in studio equipment! And sheer curtains are super-portable if you want to carry one in your camera bag for unexpected opportunities.

4. OPEN DOORS

If you want your family photo to have the feel of everyone being inside, but you need more light, have everyone stand or sit in an open doorway.

TIP: SCOPE OUT THE LIGHT

Be aware of the light in your home. Which rooms get the best light at different times of day? Set yourself up for success by making note of when great light is available.

AMY RHODES

Amy Rhodes, the CONFIDENCE photography workshop teacher in Nevada, illustrates why the backdoor is her favorite spot for taking pictures in her home. You can see how opening the door casts a beautiful, soft light on the children's faces, but doesn't illuminate the background. Amazing light is in your home—experiment with these different places to find yours!

The outside light will illuminate their faces while keeping the background dark.

5. LAMPS

By turning off your flash and using a higher ISO, lamp light can bring a warm look to your photo's story. The key is to turn off all the other lights in the room so that your single lamp is the only light source. This will make the lamp's light much more dramatic and warm in tone versus being diluted by overhead lighting or other lamps.

VERONICA BERNAL

Veronica Bernal, a CONFIDENCE photography workshop graduate, captured a gorgeous moment between her grandpa and daughter. Window light creates a soft diffused look that adds to the story of gentleness and love.

6. BATHTUBS

Who would ever guess that the bathtub would be a great place for finding light? But I love doing part of my photo shoots in bathtubs! If near a window, the white, enamel surface acts as a reflector—bouncing gorgeous window light everywhere!

7. SLIDING GLASS DOORS OR FRENCH DOORS

On cloudy days, have your family sit next to sliding glass doors or French doors for even more light than a single window can give. If you want an even light on all their faces, have them face the sliding glass doors. If you want a partly shadowed light on their faces for depth, have them sit with their sides to the sliding glass doors.

TIP: LESS IS MORE

The old, tried-and-true advice for writing is a powerful tool for photography too: Less is more. When shooting details like hands, zoom in or move your body so close that there's nothing else in the frame except for that detail. If the background isn't adding to the overall story, there's no reason to have it in the photo. This may feel awkward if you aren't used to it, but it's a wonderful creative exercise to ask yourself, "How much tighter can I get? What does 'less is more' look like for the story I'm capturing?" The clearer the photo's story, the more powerful it is.

FUN AND GAMES

What could be more a part of your everyday family life than video games? Whether we like it or not, for most of us, it's the truth. The upside is how much fun the adults have playing with the kids! One of the kids' favorite things to do during family gatherings is challenge the aunts, uncles, cousins—even grandma—to a racing game or dance-off. The facial expressions that happen are hilarious, and since everyone is so focused on winning, no one will notice you sitting right in front of them to take the photo.

WHEN: Anytime family is gathered together and different generations are going against one another. Or, a time of day when your window light is bright and the kids are playing video games.

PREP: Encourage the adults to sit or stand in between the kids. This helps balance differences in height and size.

FOR POINT-AND-SHOOT USERS: Turn off your flash. Set your camera to Portrait mode to ensure a softer background and sharper focus on your subjects. Choose Continuous shooting or Burst mode to catch as many facial expressions as possible.

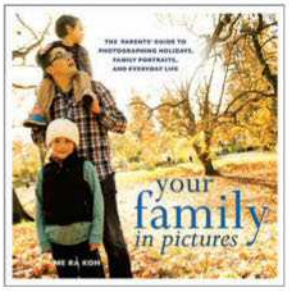
FOR DSLR USERS: Turn off your flash. Set your camera to Aperture Priority mode, and pick the lowest *f*-stop possible to allow in the most light. You may need to raise your ISO if your photos are picking up motion blur from a shutter speed that's too slow. The shutter speed used for this photo (1/60) is too slow for my comfort because sudden movement in my subjects may cause blur. A safer shutter speed for subtle movements is 1/125, unless your camera or lens has an image stabilizer feature that you can use to shoot even slower—like I did in this photo. Set your camera to Continuous Shooting mode or Burst mode to capture every funny facial expression you see.

COMPOSE: A horizontal frame worked well for this photo because it allowed for all three of us to be evenly positioned within the frame. But if your family is standing and doing a dance-off, a vertical frame may make better sense.

CAPTURE: Focus on the family member in the center of the frame. If they're all sitting on the couch, they will most likely be within the same focus plane. But our eye looks to the person who's in the center and closest to us, so that's a good place to lock your focus.

USE BLACK-AND-WHITE TO SIMPLIFY YOUR SURROUNDINGS

Black-and-white can come in handy when you want all the attention drawn to the emotion and facial expressions rather than to the items in the background. For this photo, even though I blurred the bookshelves in the background, they were still distracting from the facial expressions when the photo was in color. But black-and-white made all those distractions go away.



ME RA KOH, *the Photo Mom and Disney Junior Channel Host, is the author of* Your Family in Pictures, *the latest in her best-selling series. She teaches her CONFIDENCE photography workshops for women around the country and is honored to be a Sony Artisan of Imagery. Find her at www.merakoh.com.*

CHILD'S PLAY

HOW TO PLAN FOR AND ENGAGE KIDS IN LIVELY PORTRAIT SESSIONS

TEXT & PHOTOGRAPHY BY SHANNON SEWELL

Kids can be your cutest, most animated, uninhibited and fun subjects to photograph. They can also be the most distracted, emotionally charged, quick-moving and difficult. So, how do you plan for the latter while creating the former? Successful children's photography relies heavily on being able to connect with the child you're photographing.

There are a few key things that hold true for most kids. They're happy and excited for the little things, they savor the moment, they don't hold grudges, and they're always ready to play. The trick is finding the things unique to each child that ignite these responses. I've found the quickest route is a questionnaire that I send to the parents before the session. The questionnaire can be either written or verbally conducted.

I ask questions of the kids like: What's your favorite part of getting your picture taken? What's your favorite thing to do with your family? What's your favorite toy? Or color? Or place to play? For the parents, I ask things like: Does your child have any quirks or unique things you'd like captured? Are there any special places or things you think would be fun to include in your shoot? Any little tidbits about your child you think I should know (likes/dislikes, shy/outgoing, etc.)?

Sometimes, kids need some space and a break from the camera. That doesn't mean you have to quit shooting, though—landscape shots with the kids just being themselves can make for beautiful wall displays.

Not only do the answers to these questions help me plan the location and concepts for our shoot, they let me know things about the kids' personalities that will guide me in how I interact with them at the session. I also use the information I have to "take 15," which refers to the first 15 minutes or so of the shoot when I don't spend a lot of time shooting. I use those first minutes to chat about their interests and things I know about them. The camera may be used, but it's in a very casual, nonintrusive way. It helps us become friends and let our guards down—they see I'm interested in them, and that what they have to say and bring to the shoot matter to me.

Many times, this homework and bit of time taken at the beginning will set us up for an easy-going shoot that's done before we know it!

Kids are kids, though. They have short attentions spans, they get tired, and sometimes, taking pictures just isn't their thing. I have several little tricks up my sleeve that will help to bring kids back around (even if it's just for a few minutes at a time).

MY TURN/YOUR TURN

Sometimes, kids just need a chance to take charge. Many sessions are all about telling the kids where to sit, how to pose, when to smile. Allowing them a chance to pick these things gives them a renewed interest in what we're doing. In order to keep the session on task, though, we use some bartering—for every location they choose, I choose one. For every pose they pick, I pick one. It becomes a game, of sorts, which leads me to my next tip.

PLAY GAMES

Games like Red Light, Green Light or Simon Says are perfect for kids you're trying to get to stay still while laughing and having fun. It's also a great way to burn off energy for your more active little subjects.

INDIVIDUAL ATTENTION

There are a couple of reasons for this. One is to give the other kids a few minutes' break while you take turns, and the other is to give each kid their own time and make it about them. It's a perfect time to tune in to personality. Are they introspective, so we do quieter, more thoughtful poses? Are they full of energy, so we do jumping, dancing, running poses? Not all kids in a family have the same feelings on what makes a fun shoot. Giving each child their time ensures everyone goes home happy.

Most times, if I'm getting the kids involved through all the ways we just talked about, there are no issues at all. Sometimes, it's hard to end the shoot because of all the fun we're having! In the cases where that doesn't work, I've usually found that it's due to the child feeling overwhelmed, tired or shy. If that's the case, then try the following.

TAKE A BREAK

For a snack, a drink, to run—sometimes kids just need the camera out of their faces for a few to reset. I always allow extra time for shoots with kids just for this reason. Avoiding back-

to-back appointments or too-close-to-sunset shoots is a good idea.

LET THEM BE IN CHARGE

Bring a small camera to let the kids be the photographer for a while or take a break to show them the images on the back of your camera and let them "judge." Letting the kids know that they're part of the plan and that they have a voice can go a long way.

JUST PLAY

Allowing extra time also means you don't have to have a camera up at all times. Play with the kids, and once they're giggling and having fun, you can bring the camera back in.

INVOLVE THEIR FAVORITE THINGS

Bringing in their animals or a favorite toy or "blankie" (this is where the questionnaire comes in) takes the focus off them, and also adds an element of joy and playfulness. If the kids have special talents, ask them to show them off! Who doesn't love a little impromptu concert? Ask questions about what they do and then have them show you. Sometimes,

Let the kids show off! Bubble-blowing contests, playing a musical instrument or even their latest ballet dance—it all makes for completely natural shots of the kids being themselves and doing what they love.

Go for the group shot—laughing contests, snuggles. Capture the interactions to help tell the whole story.

Think outside of the box. The best way to keep kids interested is to do the unexpected. Food fights, jumping in mud puddles, finger paints turned into face paints—all these no-nos will bring the best giggles.

Bring some fun props that go along with the kids' interests. Do they love animals, for example? Letting them pretend to be kitties for part of their session will be sure to win them over.

Kids love parties, and you don't have to wait for a birthday to celebrate. Bring balloons, confetti, anything that gets the kids in a fun party mood. The smiles you capture will be far from the "cheese" shots of your typical portrait session.

you just wait and capture them in the moment of what they're doing—even pouts can be pretty cute!

PULL BACK SOMETIMES

It's nice to give kids their space at times and capture them from afar. Plus, pullback shots make great wall canvases.

DON'T FORGET MOM AND DAD

Make it all about the parents for a while. Giving the parents a chance to connect and have fun relaxes things, and the kids can follow their example! It can help them remember why they started their family in the first place. Invite the kids in to play with the parents—have races, play games, make them forget they're there to take pictures. The entire shoot goes this way: pause-play-pause-play.

The key to a successful shoot all boils down to engaging your subject. This starts with the first email. Knowing what they want, what they like and what makes them tick will ensure you're finding a place where your style and their style can create something uniquely them! Here are a few additional things to remember.

COMPLIMENT

When you're taking shots, say things like, "That's perfect!" "You look so pretty in this light!" or "I love how your colors complement you all!" Building confidence makes them better models.

LOCATION

During your planning, find out their special or fun places. You want the location to be a place they think fondly of and are excited to be. Make sure it doesn't have a ton of distractions—save playgrounds and things to climb or investigate for the end of the shoot or for kids that can easily focus.

HELP

Bring an intern, a friend or ask the parents to bring someone who can help watch kids, fetch things from the car and make sure no one is stretched too thin, or images may be missed because you aren't able to keep a calm atmosphere and things running smoothly.

Taking the time to really get to know your clients and make sure that the session of the kids is all about the kids—their imagination and having fun—allows you to create photos that make people feel childhood and connect with the children you're photographing. DP

Games like Red Light, Green Light (literally, in the case of this crosswalk shot) allow you to control exactly where the kids stand or what pose they're in—all while they get to play!

BRING THE PARTY

What little things do I keep in my camera bag just in case?

1. STICKERS: For my forehead, for little ones and for the floor as spot markers.

2. NOISE MAKERS: Party blowers are great for getting the attention of kids who have become bored of the camera.

3. FINGER PUPPETS: The puppets often become the photographer and tell me silly stories all about the kids (for them to hear, of course).

4. BALLOONS: They never ruin a picture and they're fun take-home prizes!

5. PROPS: My props are always based on our questionnaire before the session and aimed at the kids' personalities, so usually they find them quite fun.

SHANNON SEWELL *is a children's editorial and commercial photographer. She spends her days playing dress-up and taking pictures. See more of her work at* ***shannonsewell.com.***

Lighting For Skin Tones

HOW TO MAKE SKIN LOOK GREAT WITH SUBTLE CHANGES TO THE POSITION AND QUALITY OF THE LIGHT SOURCE—WHETHER THAT'S A STROBE OR SUNLIGHT OR ANYTHING IN BETWEEN

BY WILLIAM SAWALICH

There's one thing all portrait subjects share in common: They want to look good. Young and old, men and women alike, everybody hates to see their wrinkles and blemishes on display. So learn how to light to minimize flaws and produce smooth, flattering skin tones.

IT ALL STARTS IN THE CAMERA

Whether you're working with ambient light or strobes, window light or a softbox, it's imperative to set the camera's white balance manually in order to produce the most accurate color. There's nothing less flattering for a face that's too green or too magenta, which can happen if the auto white balance misses. Imagine you're photographing someone with beautiful sunset lighting as the primary illumination. A manual daylight white balance would render the golden glow appropriately to produce warm, flattering portrait light. But if the camera is set to automatic white balance, it may remove some of that lovely hue.

In mixed lighting—say, blending flash with indoor bulbs—try setting a custom white balance. Simply shoot a white or neutral gray card under the subject's lighting, and be sure to fill the frame with the card. Then set the camera's white balance setting to Custom, and direct the camera to this frame. Better still, shoot RAW and refine the white balance precisely in processing.

ADD BLUR

There's a somewhat counterintuitive skin-flattering technique I learned from a fashion and beauty photographer. It's "dragging the shutter" to add blur in order to remove sharpness and edge definition from pores, wrinkles and blemishes. The subtle camera movement that occurs with a too-slow-to-handhold shutter speed, like 1/10th, can impart a bit of ambient blur even when working with strobes. When it comes to skin, more sharpness isn't usually better, so blur often improves skin tones. In the old days, that blur often was done with diffusion on the lens; now it easily can be achieved in post with Clarity and Sharpness adjustments during RAW processing, or with Photoshop's comprehensive Blur filters. Don't overdo it, though. A little blur goes a long way.

POSITIONING AND SOFTENING THE MAIN LIGHT

The first choice is between a hard and a soft light. Hard light—a bare bulb—can be flattering, but only if it's positioned near the camera axis. Specular light sources are trickier to get right because they can be so unflattering on skin if they're positioned toward the side at an angle that rakes across the face. That amplifies the appearance of texture—like wrinkles, pores and blemishes. Generally, hard-edged specular lights can be tricky to work with, but done well, the results produce beautiful, glowing skin.

The light that's easiest to use and that consistently produces the most flattering skin tones is a diffused, indirect source. Soft light like light diffused through clouds or bounced through the diffusion of a softbox, umbrella or silk minimizes texture and contrast, and generally produces soft, appealing lighting on all kinds of skin and from all kinds of angles. Still, any sidelight can enhance unflattering textures, so the main light should remain fairly frontal for subjects with less than ideal skin.

Using a large source very close to the subject produces wraparound lighting that's almost always flattering for skin. And a close source produces falloff that keeps the light interesting and avoids flat lighting. Oh, and lest you lament a lack of large sources, bouncing a speedlight off a white wall or positioning a subject near a north-facing picture window produces a beautiful, big, soft source.

For all kinds of faces and almost any kind of skin, one of the most flattering lighting techniques places the main light directly in front of and above the subject to produce a butterfly-shaped shadow between the nose and the upper lip. This "butterfly" lighting pattern has been used in beauty shots for more than a century. The frontal light fills pores and wrinkles and sets off the chin and cheekbones. Add a large white reflector below the subject's chin, roughly parallel to the floor, and this butterfly lighting becomes clamshell lighting—a popular beauty technique precisely because it fills in dark shadows and makes skin look beautiful.

NO LIGHTS? NO PROBLEM!

Some of the most beautiful portrait lighting occurs naturally. Soft ambient light can be found in north-facing windows, as well as in open shade outdoors—under tall tree canopies or in open doorways that cut harsh sunlight and provide flattering, indirect illumination. One of my favorite light sources is an open garage door. With the subject near the opening, the light is flatter and more omnidirectional. But put that subject a few steps back, and the source will start to take on the beautiful soft look of a big, soft, directional source.

MIXING AMBIENT WITH FLASH

Sometimes the best way to make ambient light produce flattering skin tones is to add a bit of flash. Subtle on-camera flash can provide an ideal shadow-busting fill to minimize wrinkles and blemishes. To determine the ideal amount of fill without overpowering the ambience, start with the flash at its lowest output and work your way up until you can see its effects. Then dial it down a bit and you'll be in just the right spot to fill deep shadows without overpowering attractive ambience.

If you're faced with unappealing ambient light—midday sun, perhaps, or heavy overcast—an off-camera flash shot through a white umbrella can overpower the ambience and create a new key. At high noon on a sunny day, for instance, the correct ambient exposure at ISO 100 will be 1/100th at $f/16$. Make it 1/250th, then, and the ambient will be one stop underexposed, and a fairly powerful diffused flash (strong enough to produce $f/16$ at ISO 100) can create studio-style, skin-flattering illumination, even outdoors at high noon.

GEL THE LIGHTS

Indoors, when working with normal household bulbs, any flash additions should be gelled orange to match the warmth of tungsten bulbs. Failure to gel the sources will produce orange ambience (when the camera is set to a daylight or flash white balance setting) or blue strobe illumination (when the camera is set for tungsten). Neither of these options is ideal for skin, so a full CTO (color temperature orange) gel is designed to shift the Kelvin temperature of the strobe to match tungsten; just cut a swatch of the gel and clip it or tape it over the strobe to match the sources.

That same orange gel used on a strobe outdoors can simulate the warmth of a golden sunset. Place the strobe at a low angle and you can quickly mimic sunset with a simple off-camera flash. Warmth, in general, is almost always flattering for skin. More subtle gelling has a long tradition in portrait studios and Hollywood productions for producing flattering skin tones—try subtle pink, amber and gold gels for a healthy glow. DP

GEAR FOR PERFECT SKIN TONE

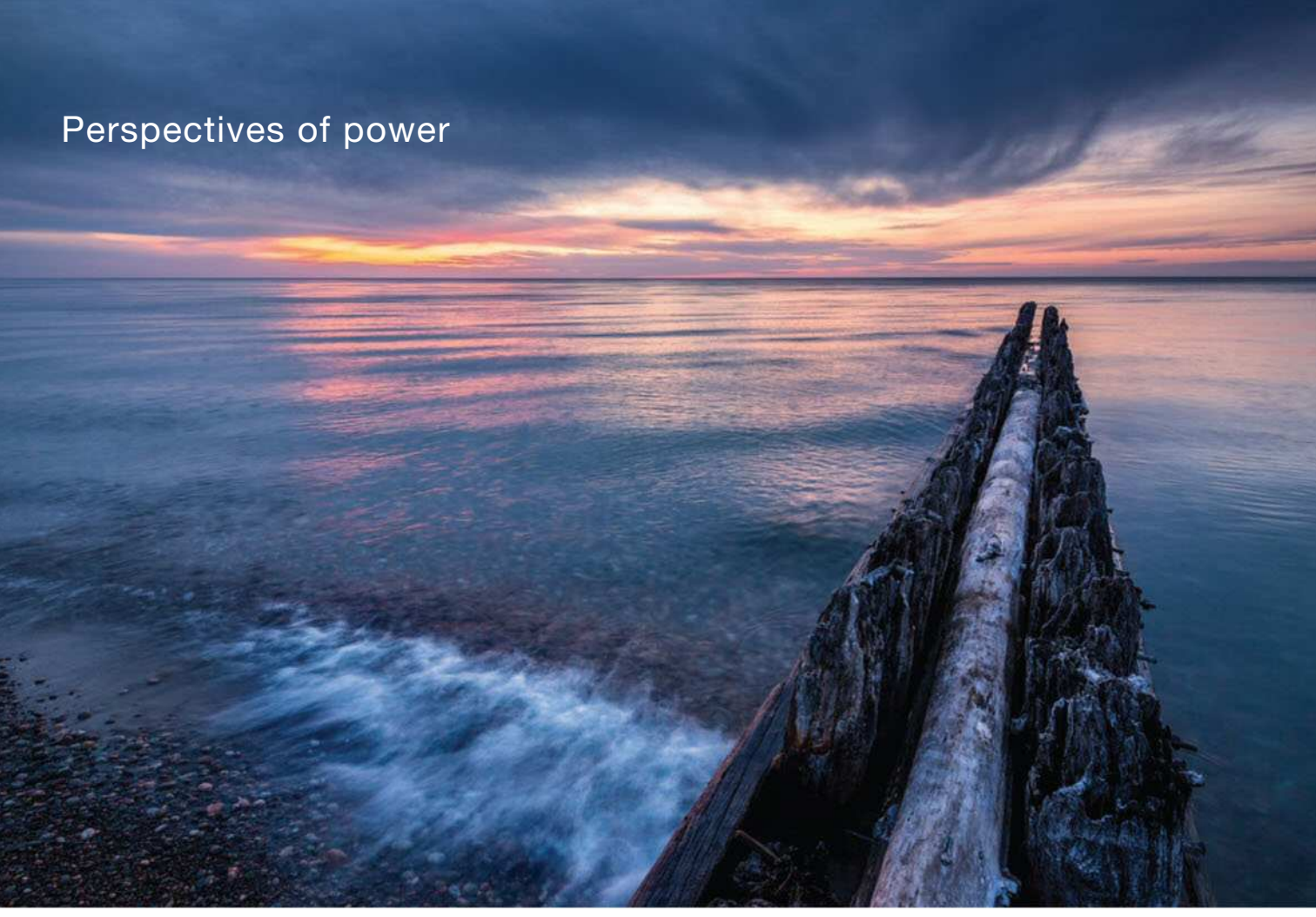
HERE ARE SOME EXAMPLES OF RECOMMENDED TOOLS FOR CREATING FLATTERING PORTRAIT LIGHT AND EXPOSURES

WHIBAL WHITE BALANCE REFERENCE CARD
Available in four sizes from the 7.5x10-inch Reference to the smaller Studio, Pocket (pictured) and Keychain options, the WhiBal White Balance Reference Card is water- and scratch-proof to stand up to years of use. Low-reflectivity neutral gray is complemented with white and black patches, as well, to help you set white balance, white point and black point in post. **List Price: From $15.95 (Keychain) to $49.95 (Reference). Contact: WhiBal (Michael Tapes Design), michaeltapesdesign.com.**

EXPODISC 2.0 PROFESSIONAL WHITE BALANCE FILTER
Another option for setting custom white balance is the 2.0 Professional White Balance Filter from ExpoDisc. Attach the filter to your lens and set white balance using your camera's custom white balance feature—it's that simple. It can also be used to meter a perfect 18% incident exposure and map sensor dust. Version 2.0 includes portrait warming gels that you can use with the filter to add degrees of warmth to skin tones. Currently available in 77mm and 82mm sizes. **List Price: $49.95. Contact: ExpoImaging, expoimaging.com.**

PROFOTO RFI OCTA SOFTBOX
Compatible with over 20 flash brands via speedring adapters, the octagonal Softbox RFi Octa from Profoto features a deep shape and recessed front for precise control. Octagonal softboxes are great for portraiture, as they create natural-looking catchlight in your subject's eyes. The RFi Octa is designed to tolerate heavy professional use, and is available in three diameters, 3-foot, 4-foot and 5-foot. **Estimated Street Price: $235. Contact: Profoto, profoto.com.**

ROGUE FLASH GEL KITS
Add warmth to your speedlight output with Rogue Universal Gels, which fit any standard shoe-mount flash. Each is labeled with the Kelvin color temperature correction. The kit includes 14 color effects gels, 5 color correction gels and one diffusion gel in a range of hues across the spectrum, including Full CTO, 1/2 CTO and 1/4 CTO, ideal for warming skin tones. The included Rogue Gel-Band attaches the gels to your flash. **List Price: $29.95. Contact: Rogue Photographic Design (ExpoImaging), expoimaging.com.**



Focal length: 15mm Exposure: F/11 0.6 sec ISO400 © Ian Plant

new

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Travel Portraits

BREAKING THE ICE AND GETTING THE SHOT

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY TOM BOL

When I first started to shoot travel portraits, I was paralyzed at the thought of approaching complete strangers and taking their picture. I was convinced they'd start hurtling expletives my way the second I raised my camera. Better to hide in the bushes with a long lens and "paparazzi" the locals without them knowing. But shooting from the bushes just wasn't producing the images I wanted. There had to be another way.

I've learned better through the years. Sure, I still get rejected from time to time, but generally in a courteous manner. And if you still don't like the idea of getting close with your subject, don't worry. You don't always have to be eye to eye with your subject for a good portrait. Below are some tips that will help any photographer create dramatic travel portraits, whether up close and personal or from a distance.

1. GO OUT EARLY

Some of my best street portraits have been taken just after sunrise. The streets aren't as busy, people are more relaxed, and beautiful, warm light floods the streets. I love going out for an hour before breakfast to get the vibe of a city as it wakes up. Bakers, laborers and dog walkers stroll past; the first inhabitants are out and about, and they're more approachable than later in the day when things are busier.

2. SLOW DOWN

A great travel portrait technique is moving slow. Take a seat on a park bench and...wait. Interesting people will come and go, and you can snap interactions of locals on the street. Often when I'm in a park, locals will approach me and strike up a conversation. After chatting for a while, I'll ask if I can take their portrait, and generally the answer is yes.

ABOVE: Photography is a universal language. Sharing images on your camera's LCD can help establish a connection and build rapport, like I did with these gauchos who ride the rugged Patagonia landscape of Chile.

3. BREAK THE ICE

Is it possible to communicate in every one of the 6,500 languages spoken in the world? Yes! You have a tool to communicate in any language—your camera LCD. Show your subject their picture and establish rapport with them; your portraits will be better because of it. If you want to take this a step further, try bringing a small Polaroid camera, so you can hand out prints. I guarantee you'll have more new friends than you can count.

4. ASK PERMISSION

There are basically two strategies to getting a portrait: participatory and non-participatory. In other words, interacting with your subject or shooting them unaware. Snapping images of a local who isn't aware of the camera works in many cases. Imagine a man relaxing on a bench looking at the setting sun. You can create some great shots with a 70-200mm without disturbing him. One the other hand, maybe you want to create a more personable image, one that reflects a connection between you and your subject. This image will require you to approach the subject and get his okay for a closer shot. Any time a subject knows I'm taking their portrait, I ask permission. This can be as simple as pointing to my camera and then lifting it toward them. If they don't want their picture taken, they'll wave you off.

5. USE A GUIDE

Local guides know the language, customs, geography; they're invaluable on any trip abroad. I was just in Turkey teaching a workshop, and we stopped in a small town to photograph local people. Our guide started talking to a bunch of men playing backgammon and smoking a hookah pipe. After a few minutes, our guide invited us over and introduced us to the locals. These stoic men now knew our intentions and were happy to have their picture taken. Without our guide, these portraits would have never happened. Guides also know the territory. In Turkey, our guide brought us to local markets we'd never have found on our own.

6. LOOK FOR FRIENDS

Imagine you're sitting in a lawn chair in your front yard reading a book, and suddenly a van stops. Out pour eight photographers with cameras in hand, all speaking a foreign language, and they circle you with shutters blazing away. This scenario is intimidating! When I'm photographing shy subjects, I often encourage them to pose with a friend or family member. People feel more comfortable with friends nearby, and this can elicit some humorous expressions!

7. WATCH THE BACKGROUND

I was recently in Vietnam photographing locals on the street. An old man was walking, and

RIGHT: When photographing children, try sitting or crouching down to be eye level with them for a more engaging shot.

he saw me taking his image. He smiled slightly, so I knew I had the green light to keep shooting. I was so excited about photographing him that I made a classic mistake: I forgot to check the background. Behind the man was a vacant building with metal bars, wires and concrete sticking out, creating a confusing mess. In this case, the background ruined my shot. No amount of postprocessing or extreme bokeh would help. Always remember to watch your background when shooting portraits. If the background isn't working, wait for your subject to move elsewhere or choose a shallow depth of field to create blur behind your subject.

8. GO SHOPPING AT THE MARKET/FESTIVAL

One of the best places to create travel portraits is markets and festivals. These events attract throngs of people, and you'll have lots of subjects. Markets reveal locals shopping for everyday items, vendors selling goods and families socializing. You may run into some people who don't want their picture taken. After all, they're trying to make a living, and tourists blocking locals from shopping or disrupting their day isn't good for business. But that's the exception, not the norm. If you really want to put the odds in your favor, schedule your trip to coincide with a local festival. Most festivals have a jubilant, upbeat atmosphere, and people are more open to having their picture taken.

9. IT'S ALL ABOUT THE LIGHT

Once you've found your subject, you still have to create stunning portraits using good camera technique. And that starts with the right light. Open shade works great for quick travel portraits. Your subject doesn't have to squint, and you don't have to use reflectors or flash (less intimidating for your subject). Look for warm early morning light, too. Subjects look great bathed in warm light. Beware of overhead sun. If you're photographing subjects in overhead light, you may need to add some fill flash to reduce shadows from hat brims. Try to have your subject face away from the sun so they don't squint, and watch your exposure.

10. TRY FLASH

Modern speedlights are incredible tools for travel photographers. I use an SB900 for travel portraits, and without it, I would miss many shots. Don't be intimidated by your speedlight! Use your flash in TTL mode, so the flash and camera work together to achieve the best exposure. More often than not, TTL flash will give you good results with minimal fuss. I often shoot my SB900 through a Lastolite 24-inch Ezybox. This softbox softens the light for flattering portraits of almost any subject.

11. WORK THE ANGLES

Okay, you landed in an exotic country, timed your visit with a colorful festival, and have brought your flash for portraits. Now what? Don't just stand there and shoot—get creative! Viewers like to see something fresh and interesting, not just the angle you create standing behind your tripod. If you're photographing kids, crouch down to their level to create a more compelling shot. If a local is selling flowers, how about a wide-angle shot with flowers pressed against the bottom edge of your lens for a unique perspective? I just saw an incredible portrait a participant took on my recent trip to Turkey. She decided to go ground level to photograph some women in front of a mosque, and in doing so also captured their image in a reflection on the marble floor. This ground-level angle was interesting and different, and it caught the viewer's attention.

I hear Morocco is an interesting place to visit. Flaming-orange sand dunes, colorful markets and lots of interesting people on the street. Sign me up—this sounds perfect for travel portraits. DP

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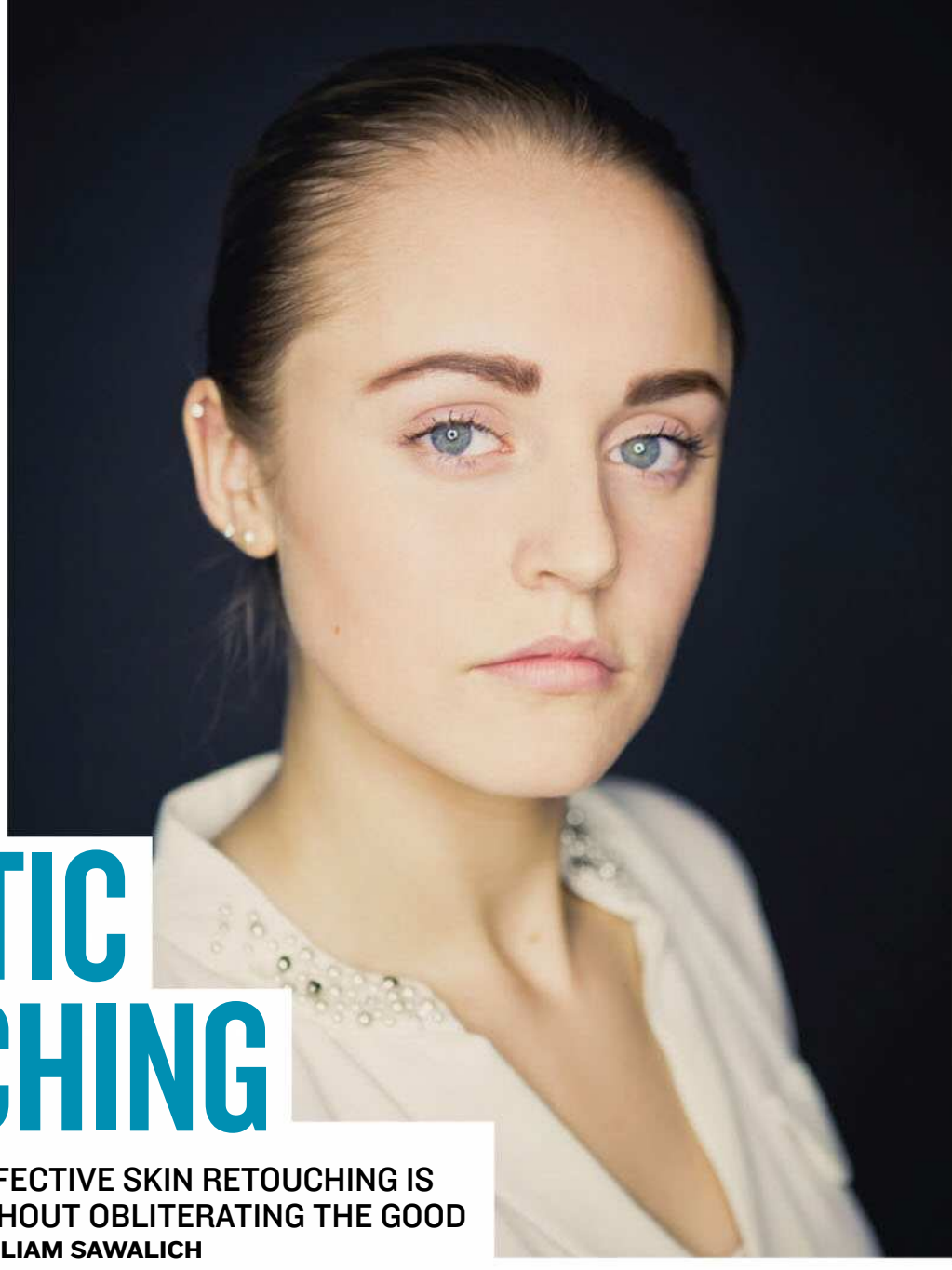
I have a theory about skin retouching: The only thing worse than an unretouched portrait is an overly retouched portrait. My goal is always to improve the subject's skin without creating an image that looks fake. That's the biggest challenge ultimately. Anybody can make skin pretty with diffusion and blur, but retouching skin without obliterating detail requires a different, subtler approach.



SIMPLY REALISTIC RETOUCHING

THE KEY TO EASY AND EFFECTIVE SKIN RETOUCHING IS MINIMIZING THE BAD WITHOUT OBLITERATING THE GOOD

TEXT & PHOTOGRAPHY BY WILLIAM SAWALICH

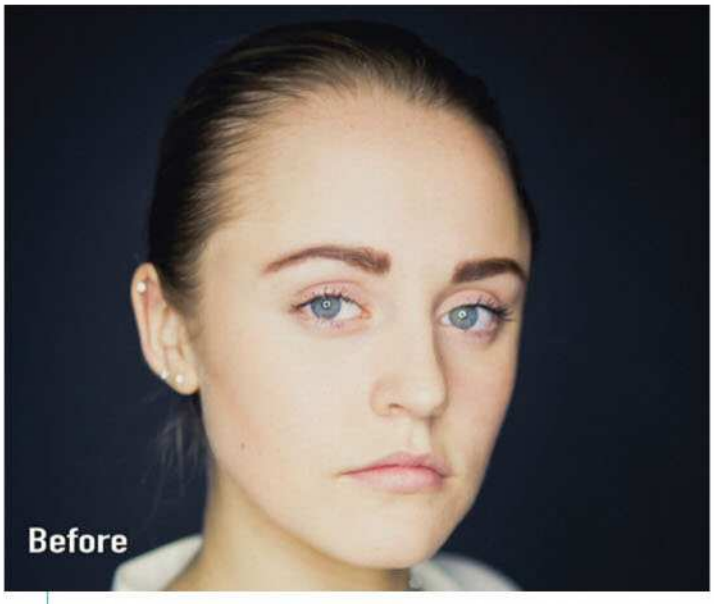
CLARITY

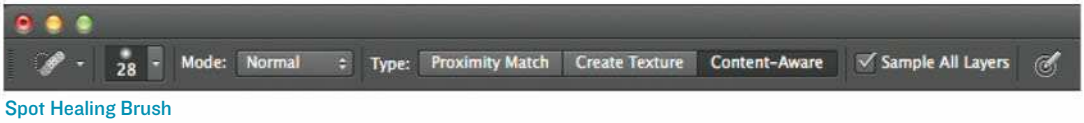
On practically every portrait, I make three simple skin fixes. First, when I'm making RAW conversions (in Lightroom, Adobe Camera Raw, Capture One, et al), I reduce the Clarity by about 20%. This reduces sharpness and detail on the skin. Sharpness and detail are fine for someone with absolutely perfect skin, but for the rest of us regular folks, a little softness goes a long way to improving our skin tones.

SPOT RETOUCHING

After taking the edge off with the Clarity slider, I open the image file in Photoshop for localized skin retouching. I start with the Spot Healing brush and the Clone Stamp to eliminate small blemishes and minimize wrinkles. The Spot Healing brush is particularly useful for removing, well, spots. Simply set the mode to Content Aware and the Spot Healing brush size to slightly larger than the spot, or use a click-and-drag approach to paint with a smaller brush, and the fix will be made automatically. About half the time this one-click process works well. When it doesn't, or in areas that require a bit more refinement, I undo and turn to the Clone Stamp.

My rule of thumb for retouching with the Clone Stamp is to set it to a fairly low opacity, a 0% hardness and use multiple clicks to build up to a bigger change. This technique falls short in one particular instance, and that's when you're cloning any textured or patterned surface. Skin with prominent pores, for instance, won't hold up well with this approach and instead requires setting the Stamp to 100% opacity and paying close attention to the pores' positioning. You can always use the Fade tool (in the Edit menu) to reduce the Stamp's intensity after it's applied, which can help blend the Stamp more seamlessly. My favorite use of the Clone Stamp at a low opacity is for mini-





Spot Healing Brush

Clone Stamp

mizing crow's feet and bags under eyes. You can start with the Stamp at 100% opacity (which likely will look obvious and way overdone), then again use the Fade tool to dial back the intensity. For under-eye bags, a very low setting of about 20% will make a huge difference and isn't likely to trigger those over-retouching alarms. Setting the Stamp's mode to Color is also helpful for removing under-eye discoloration.

SUBDUING SHINE

To remove shine from skin, I use the Brush tool set to approximately the same size as the subject's eye, at 0% hardness and with the opacity and flow both set from 20% to 25%. This makes the Brush very subtle, which is exactly how I eliminate distracting shine and even out tonal inconsistencies. For a shine-induced highlight on the forehead or bridge of the nose, I set up the Brush tool and then Alt-click on a nearby area of ideal skin tone. This will set that color as the foreground color to be painted on the skin. Then I simply click and drag to paint over the bright spot. With the Brush's mode set to Darken, only the bright, shiny spot is removed and darker details remain. Sometimes, though, I leave the mode set to Normal in order to even out and blend the overall skin tone, minimizing blotchiness. I'll often set the Brush tool to Color mode and use it to eliminate red noses or discolorations. A little bit of the Brush tool goes a long way, though, so don't overdo it, or the subject will appear almost lifeless. A little shine is okay; it's a lot of shine that we want to eliminate.

WARMING COLOR

Lastly, there's a color adjustment that makes almost everybody's skin look better: adding warmth with a Photo Filter Adjustment Layer. The default filter that appears when you click on the Photo Filter in the Adjustment Layers palette is the Warming Filter (85). An opacity between 5% and 20% is the sweet spot for making skin look nice and warm—an artificial healthy glow. DP

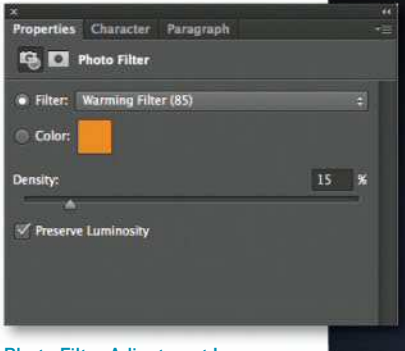


Photo Filter Adjustment Layer

BACKGROUND

TRICKS

FIVE WAYS TO BETTER PORTRAIT BACKDROPS | BY WES PITTS

"Watch your background!" is one of the first lessons to learn as a photographer, and it's an essential tip for portraiture. Clean and simple is generally best; cluttered backgrounds distract from your subject. That doesn't mean your portrait backgrounds need to be stark and uninteresting. With enough lens blur—achieved in-camera with a fast aperture or using software in post—even "busy" backgrounds can be complementary.

SELECT YOUR BACKGROUND CAREFULLY

Having a concept and previsualizing the result will help you select flattering backgrounds, whether you're shooting outdoors or creating a scene in the studio. The opening image of this article works really well because the rich, warm tones in the subjects' hair are echoed in the colors of autumn foliage in the background, which are blurred enough to provide visual separation. The background works to highlight, not detract from, the natural beauty of the models. Their clothing and accessories also blend well into the scene. Now, imagine the same subjects in front of a brick wall. They would look terribly out of place. Don't misunderstand—a brick wall can make an excellent background for portraits if the subject, wardrobe and props fit the scene. It's all about choosing an appropriate backdrop for the individual and purpose of the portrait.

USE A FAST LENS

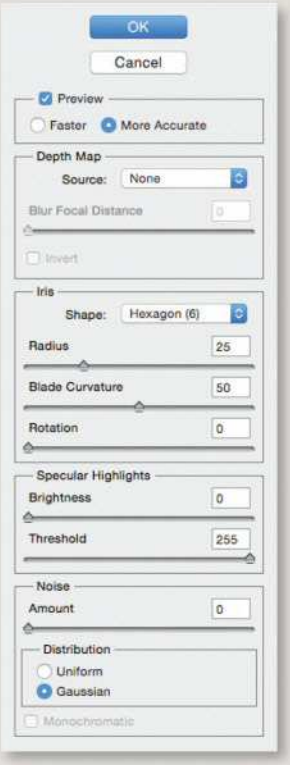
Lenses with fast maximum apertures of $f/2.8$ or faster let you restrict depth of field and create a pleasingly soft background. Remember to be extra-precise with your focus, though. The shallower your depth of field, the greater risk you run that part of your subject's face will be out of focus. If in doubt, take a few test shots early in the session and check your focus on a large display before continuing. While soft backgrounds are nice, sharp focus on your subject is critical. For more on lens selection, see "Lenses For Portraiture" also in this issue.

TRY SOFTWARE DEFOCUSING

The photo on the next page is a great example of a good background benefiting from more blur. The colors are beautiful and the scene is idyllic, but it's also busy and distracting. Software can help! Many applications like Alien Skin Exposure 7 and onOne Perfect Photo Suite 9 include tools that defocus the background for you, or you can do it manually in Photoshop. Here's a fairly easy technique you can use in Photoshop that lets you be as precise as you like.

1. Open your image in Photoshop and select Layer > Duplicate Layer.

Try Software Defocusing



2. With this new layer selected in the Layers palette, go to Filter > Blur > Lens Blur.

3. There are several settings to experiment with in Lens Blur to arrive at an effect that's pleasing to you. In this example, I set the Iris Shape to Hexagon, the Radius to 25 and Blade Curvature to 50, with Gaussian distribution.

4. When you're satisfied with the look of the blur, it's time to bring back sharpness to your subject. To start, add a mask to this layer. Go to Layer > Layer Mask > Reveal All.

5. Now, we're literally going to "paint" the sharpness back onto the subject by building up the layer mask. With your paint color set to black, select the Brush tool and choose a medium-sized brush with low Hardness and Flow. For this example, I used a brush size of 80 pixels, with 10% Hardness and 25% Flow. Low settings for Hardness and Flow make the brush more forgiving, so you can paint closer to the edge of your subjects without running over into the background.

6. I like to start with the subjects' faces and work out to other important details. Go slow and stop often. Each time you release the tool is a step in History that you can undo if you overpaint.

7. As you work closer to the edges, you can reduce your brush size to get as detailed and precise as you like.

8. If you do overpaint—bringing back detail in areas of the background that you don't want—you can switch your paint color to white and paint those spots, which will remove the mask from them.

9. As a final step, I like to dial back the intensity by reducing the global opacity of the blurred layer. This step helps to blend the transition around the edges of your mask and achieve just the right strength of blur. In this example, I tried a range of opacities from 90% to 40%, and eventually settled on 50% as my favorite for this particular shot.

What I really like about this technique as opposed to some more automated approaches is the level of precision you can achieve. It does take some time, but it can be fun, too.

INVEST IN PHOTO BACKDROPS

One of the best investments you can make if you're setting up a studio is a few neutral backdrops. They guarantee a professional look for your work and are indispensable when you want to do a full-length portrait with a continuous pattern from background to foreground floor.

You can get a lot of mileage out of just a few backdrops by using color gels

on your background lights. Muslins with a marbled gray and white pattern are particularly good for this, as the lighter areas pick up more of the gel color.

GREENSCREEN & VIRTUAL BACKDROPS

With chroma key technology (usually referred to as "greenscreen" for the background color most commonly used in chroma key applications), you can place your subject on just about any background imaginable. This is the wizardry behind the weather forecaster on television who appears to be standing in front of an animated map. Complete background kits are available from companies such as Savage Universal and F.J. Westcott, and specialized software like PhotoKey 6 (fxhome.com) makes the magic happen. DP

You can achieve a variety of looks with a neutral backdrop by getting creative with how you light it.

Milestones And New Beginnings

USE IMPORTANT MOMENTS IN LIFE TO EXERCISE YOUR DOCUMENTARY SKILLS

TEXT & PHOTOGRAPHY BY ALESSANDRA CAVE

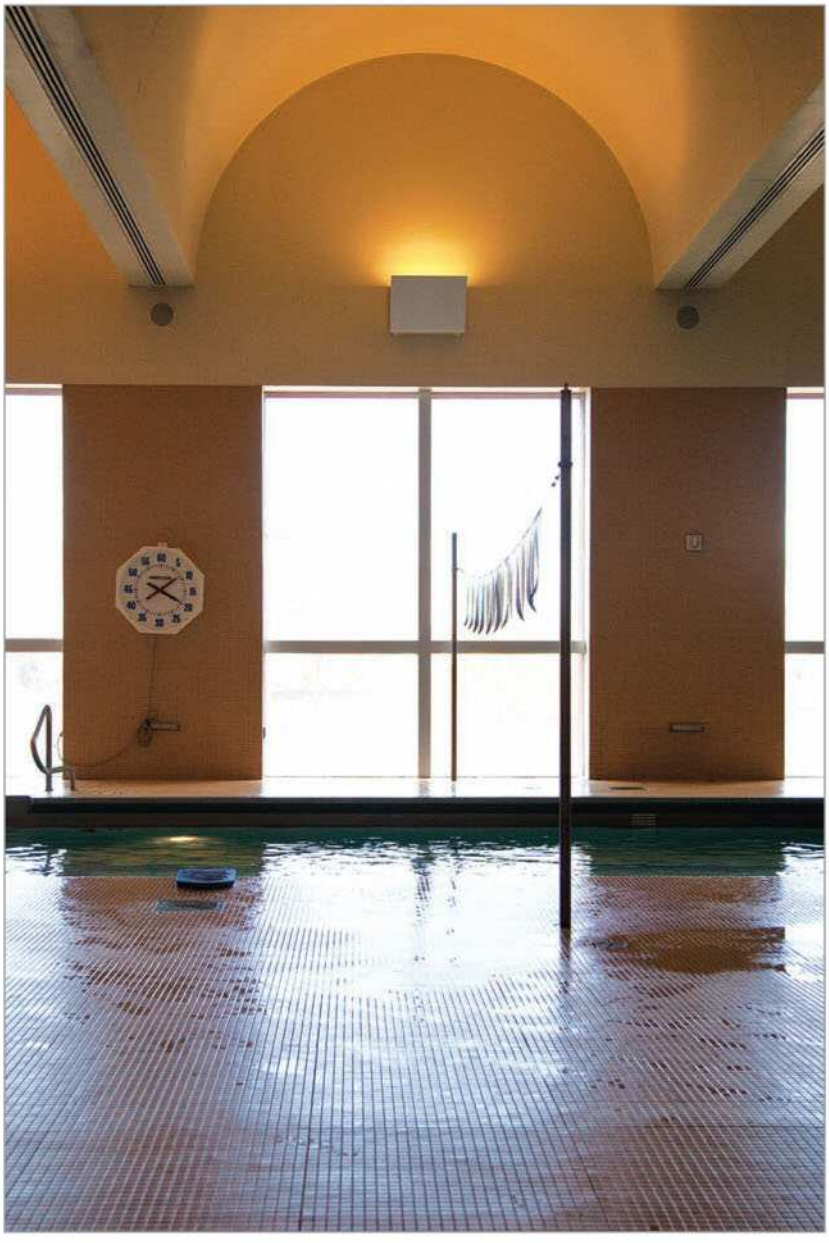
Milestones are those important moments in life that mark the passage of time. While these occasions can be very personal, some of them are universal, such as birth, a child's first steps and first words, the first day of school, the first kiss, graduation, first job, marriage, first child and grandchild.

Photography is one of the best ways to celebrate and record these pivotal and, at times, bittersweet events in our lives. From reaching small goals to developmental, academic and professional achievements, it's through images captured during those times that we're able to preserve and share our memories with others.

Children are the best evidence of time passing. Like all mothers, I find myself trying to "stop time" when I press the shutter to document another "first" with my daughter. I want to remember everything, and I want my daughter to look back someday and know that every one of her tiny accomplishments was celebrated. Motherhood has also prompted me to shoot more of my own big

In this shot of my daughter's first swimming class, I decided to capture her sitting on the edge of the pool as a metaphor for being on the edge of a new experience. Add hidden messages to your photographs. Even though the message may not be obvious, it will still make a soulful impression on your audience.

"Then swing your window open, the one with the fresh air and good eastern light, and watch for wings, edges, new beginnings."
—Monique Duval



Capture the place where the milestone is happening or being celebrated. This photograph of the swimming pool uses lighting and symmetry to form a harmonious and contemplative image, a moment of stillness in between life's chapters.

moments so I can look back and share them with my daughter in the future.

What are the milestones, big and small, in your life? For this exercise, choose a meaningful beginning or hard-earned accomplishment to document in your life or in the life of someone you love. DP

EXERCISE INSTRUCTIONS

1 | While candid shots work best for almost every photo situation, when it comes to milestones, a posed shot can be quite powerful. Ask your subject to pose for you.

2 | When photographing your children, set up the environment beforehand and then bring them into the shot so that you can better achieve what you're envisioning.

3 | Mementos can make and enhance great milestone photos. Photograph ticket stubs, flowers, menus, medals, diplomas and so on.

TECHNIQUES

1 | Milestones are usually associated with a particular environment, such as school, a stage or your home, for example. Shoot wide to create a sense of place.

2 | A portrait lens is recommended.

SHOT IDEAS

1 | Capture your child's "firsts"—first steps, first day at school, first piano recital, etc.

2 | Photograph your own milestones, such as graduation, a promotion and so on.

3 | Document the move to a new city or home.

Excerpted with permission from Shooting with Soul *by Alessandra Cave (Quarry Books, 2013). www.quarrybooks.com*

ALESSANDRA CAVE *is a commercial and editorial photographer living in San Francisco. She's also a writer, a teacher and the author of* Shooting with Soul, *an inspiration and technique book with 44 photography exercises exploring life, beauty and self-expression. Learn more about Alessandra and follow her work at* ***www.alessandracave.com.***

Tamron SP 90MM F/2.8 Di VC USD I:I Macro | Photo by Jonathan Thorpe

LENSES FOR PORTRAITURE

CONSIDERATIONS WHEN CHOOSING A LENS FOR FLATTERING PHOTOS OF PEOPLE

BY WES PITTS

Though there's no "perfect" lens for portraiture, it's generally agreed that a moderate telephoto in the range of 85mm to 135mm (35mm equivalent) is a reliably good choice. For tight headshots, an even stronger telephoto in the 200mm or even 300mm range may be a better choice. A lot depends on the space in which you have to work, your composition and the look you're after, and the background of the image.

WORKING DISTANCE

One of the main advantages of telephoto lenses for portraiture is that they allow a comfortable working distance from your subject. Consider a tightly framed headshot, for example. Longer focal lengths allow you to work at greater distances from your subject without changing your overall composition. To keep a tight crop with a 50mm lens, you'd need to stand much closer to your subject than with a longer lens.

A working distance of approximately 10 to 20 feet is good. Within this range, you can "zoom with your feet," moving slightly closer to or farther from your subject to get the perfect crop without changing your focal length.

If you have a small studio space, you'll likely be working with shorter telephoto lengths. For larger studios and outdoor portraiture, you'll have more room to work with longer lenses. Zoom lenses like those featured later in this article give you the flexibility to handle a variety of situations and compositions.

PROPORTION & DISTORTION

Lens focal length affects the angle of view and magnification. Wide-angle lenses can create a lot of distortion, becoming more pronounced the closer you get to your subject (which a wide-angle will require if you're trying to fill the frame with your subject). Your subject's face will appear sharp and angular, with the facial features nearest the lens becoming overly pronounced and elongated.

The narrower angle of view of telephoto lenses, on the other hand, creates a mild flattening effect, with the facial features less pronounced, resulting in a look that's more natural and attractive.

BACKGROUNDS

Telephoto lenses have an additional benefit of allowing you to crop out most of the background.

Tamron SP 70-200mm F/2.8 Di VC USD

Panasonic LUMIX G X VARIO 35-100mm F/2.8 ASPH

Sony E PZ 18-105mm F/4 G OSS Power Zoom

Sigma APO 70-200mm F/2.8 EX DG OS HSM

Samyang 135mm F/2.0 ED UMC

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The effects of various focal lengths on your subject's facial features can range from comically pronounced at the wide end to more subtle flattening effects at longer telephoto lengths. Telephoto lengths typically produce the most flattering looks.
Photo by Rich Legg

The longer the focal length, the stronger this effect. Telephoto lenses will also provide a shallower depth of field, gently blurring the background to help reduce distractions from your subject.

Speaking of depth of field, prime lenses and zooms with a constant aperture of *f*/2.8 or faster are preferable for portrait work due to their ability to further reduce depth of field when shooting wide open.

LENS SUGGESTIONS

Canon's EF 70-200mm *f*/2.8L IS II USM can be used with both full-frame- and APS-C-sensor Canon cameras (equivalent to 112-320mm with APS-sensor models), with a constant *f*/2.8 maximum aperture throughout the zoom range. List Price: $2,199.

Fujifilm's new Fujinon XF50-140mm *f*/2.8 R LM OIS WR zoom provides a constant *f*/2.8 aperture across the 35mm-equivalent focal range of 76-213mm when paired with Fujifilm X-series cameras like the new entry-level X-A2. List Price: $1,599.

The AF Zoom-Nikkor 80-200mm *f*/2.8D ED can be used with both FX-

and DX-format Nikons, the latter providing a 35mm-equivalent focal range of 120-300mm. It also maintains a fast ƒ/2.8 aperture throughout the range. List Price: $1,224.

For Olympus PEN and OM-D cameras, the M.Zuiko ED 40-150mm ƒ/2.8 PRO delivers a 35mm-equivalent focal range of 80-300mm with a constant ƒ/2.8 maximum aperture. List Price: $1,499.

Panasonic's LUMIX G X VARIO 35-100mm F/2.8 ASPH also features a constant ƒ/2.8 maximum aperture across its 70-200mm (35mm-equivalent) focal range. List Price: $1,499.

Designed for their diminutive Q System cameras, the Pentax 06 15-45mm ƒ/2.8 provides the 35mm equivalent of an 83-249mm zoom and maintains a maximum aperture of ƒ/2.8 throughout the zoom range. List Price: $299.

Compatible with Samsung NX cameras, the 85mm ƒ/1.4 ED NX prime has a 35mm-equivalent focal length of 130.9mm and manual-focus override. List Price: $999.

Samyang's new 135mm ƒ/2.0 ED UMC lens for Nikon F-mount has a fast maximum aperture and can be used with both FX- and DX-format Nikons, with an equivalent focal length of 202.5mm when used on DX cameras. Estimated Street Price: $549.

Sigma offers a wide variety of lenses that are suitable for portraiture, including the APO 70-200mm F2.8 EX DG OS HSM, which is available in Sigma, Canon, Nikon and Sony mounts. List Price: $1,199.

Particularly useful for portraits at the longer end of its range, the Sony E PZ 18-105mm F4 G OSS Power Zoom for E-mount offers a 35mm-equivalent range of 27-158mm and a constant ƒ/4 maximum aperture. List Price: $599.

In addition to the SP 90mm F/2.8 Di VC USD 1:1 Macro used to capture the opening image of this article, Tamron offers several lenses ideal for portraiture, including the SP 70-200mm ƒ/2.8 Di VC USD for Canon, Nikon and Sony A-mount. Estimated Street Price: $1,499.

Tokina's AT-X 70-200mm F/4 PRO FX VCM-S for Nikon can be used with both FX and DX Nikon models. When used with DX Nikons, the lens has a 35mm-equivalent range of 105-300mm. Estimated Street Price: $899. DP

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ESSENTIAL GEAR FOR PORTRAITURE

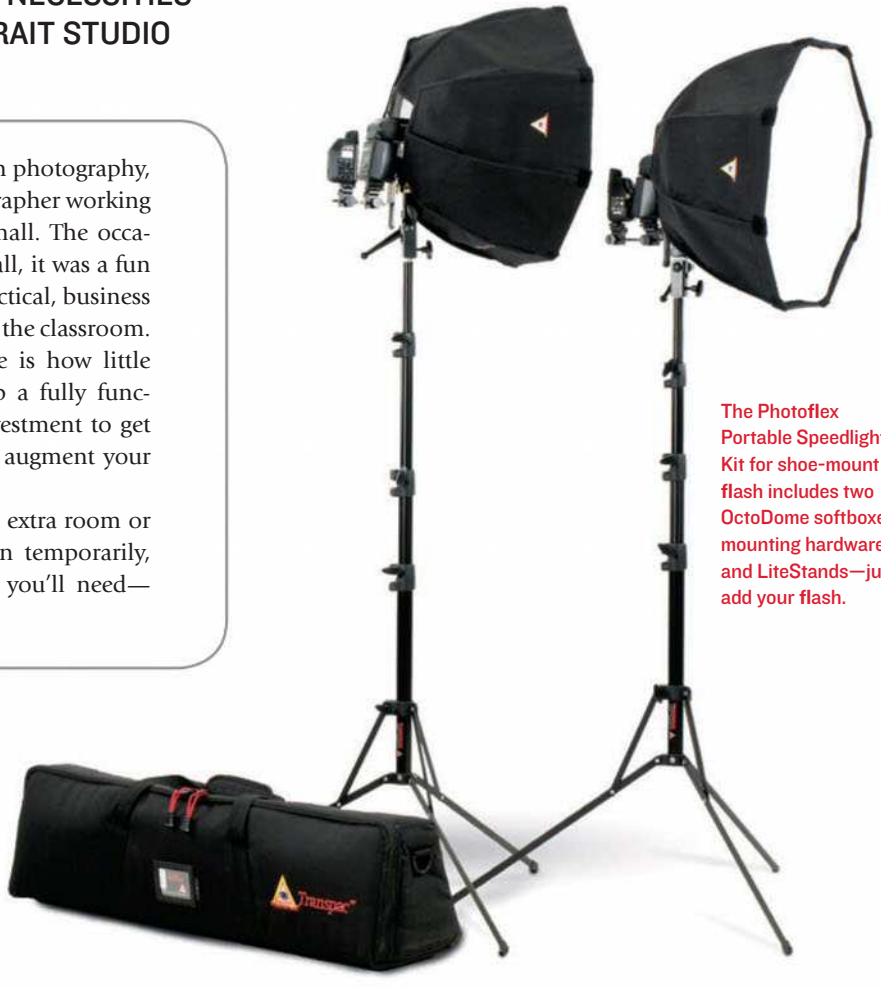
LIGHTS, STAGING AND OTHER NECESSITIES FOR SETTING UP YOUR PORTRAIT STUDIO

BY WES PITTS

While I was working on my degree in photography, I earned extra income as a photographer working at a portrait studio in the local mall. The occasional nightmare customer aside, all in all, it was a fun college job, and I learned a lot of the practical, business side of photography that you don't get in the classroom.

One thing that you may not realize is how little equipment you actually need to set up a fully functional studio. It's not that big of an investment to get started, and you can always upgrade or augment your gear as you generate income.

If you've been thinking of turning an extra room or your garage into a portrait studio, even temporarily, here are the key tools and accessories you'll need—many of which you may already own.



The Photoflex Portable Speedlight Kit for shoe-mount flash includes two OctoDome softboxes, mounting hardware and LiteStands—just add your flash.

The Bounce Kit from LumiQuest includes their Pocket Bouncer, plus gold and silver bounce surfaces and the UltraStrap adhesive mounting strap to secure it to your flash.

LIGHTS

Lighting is what sets the look of pro images apart from snapshots. You'll want two lights at a minimum—a key light for your subject and a light for your background. A third light is ideal as a fill light for your subject.

If you already own a flash, particularly a high-powered professional model that can be remotely triggered and configured to work in groups, you might choose to expand that system with additional units. The advantages of such a system are a small footprint, the flexibility to place lights in tight spaces, through-the-lens metering and the ability to control their output remotely from the master flash unit.

Alternatively, studio monolights offer advantages of their own, including faster recycling times and the option to use them as a modeling light (the ability to turn

The AlienBees B800 monolight features adjustable output control, modeling light capability and recycling to full power in I second. Multiple units can be employed together with slave functionality.

them on continuously while you adjust light positions, see where shadows fall, etc.). Generally speaking, monolights will produce stronger output, more consistent light quality and hold up better under heavy use compared to shoe-mount flash. There's also something to be said for the impression they'll make on your clients—studio lighting signals that you know what you're doing and sets you apart from the amateur photographer.

Whichever lights you choose, though, it's how you use them, and the results you achieve, that will determine whether a client is happy with his or her session. Learn the four classic lighting setups that every portrait photographer should know on our website: dpmag.com/how-to/shooting/classic-portrait-light. Then invest in light modifiers.

Adorama's 60-inch Gold Interior Umbrella is ideal for creating flattering, wraparound light with a warm tone to enhance skin.

F.J. Westcott's 18x42-inch Bruce Dorn Pro Asymmetrical Stripbank features a unique design with the light source off-center, allowing it to be used, when oriented horizontally, as both a key light and fill light simultaneously.

LIGHT MODIFIERS

The number-one light modifier you'll want on hand is a softbox. Available for shoe-mount flash and studio lights in a range of sizes and shapes, the softbox diffuses light output for even, flattering light, minimizing hot spots. Use a softbox on your key light to soften its output and reduce contrast—an effect that helps lessen the appearance of wrinkles and skin imperfections.

One consideration when choosing a softbox is its shape and the effect that has on the catchlight in your subject's eye. A rectangular softbox will create a catchlight that looks like a window light, while an octagonal shape will produce a catchlight that's rounder, like lens flare.

Another light modifier to consider for monolights is an umbrella. Unlike a softbox, which you shoot through, an umbrella bounces the light onto your subject. Umbrellas produce a broader lighting effect than a softbox, making them easy to use for good results, but they offer less directional control if you're trying to achieve a more dramatic look.

Similar to an umbrella in concept, flash bounces let you point your flash away from your subject and bounce back onto them with a softer effect. Some flash units have a bounce built in, or you can attach an accessory bounce. If you're in a small enough space, you may be able to bounce your flash off a ceiling or wall. This technique is great for fill light, but probably not strong enough as a main light.

Snoots and grids are other flash modifiers you may want to have on hand, particularly for use with your background light. This light creates separation and depth between your background and subject, and when used with a snoot or grid, which tunnel the light, can create a dramatic spotlight effect behind your subject. It's not the right look for every portrait sitting, but it's a nice option to have, especially for glamour portraits.

Learn more about light modifiers at: dpmag.com/gear/lighting/pro-light-with-flash-modifiers.

Reflectors are one of the most practical accessories you can own. They're inexpensive and require no power. Collapsed, they're highly portable. Expanded, they're easy to position for redirecting light to subtly fill shadows on your subject's face, below the neckline or other areas where you need just a little extra light. A gold reflector is especially nice for portraiture when you want to warm up skin tones.

BACKDROPS

Another investment that will pay off is a selection of backdrops. At the portrait studio where I worked, we had six backdrops for variety. Depending on the package the customer selected, we'd do three to five poses, each against a different backdrop. We had a black backdrop, a neutral gray pattern, a warmer orange pattern that resembled defocused fall foliage, pastel pink and blue vignettes for baby photos and a plain white backdrop that we'd typically light with gelled spotlights for effect. Another option is a translucent, sheer material that you can light from behind for a soft, window-lit curtain effect.

At a minimum, we recommend three backdrops: white, black and a neutral gray pattern or muslin with some texture. This gives you enough variety to handle a typical portrait sitting. Additional backdrop options are a great investment, though. Not only do they let your clients choose patterns that express their personalities, but they add variety to your portfolio when a potential client looks through your website.

TRIPOD

Every photographer should own a tripod, but it's absolutely mandatory for a portrait studio. While light weight and portability are highly desirable for travel and outdoor photography, in the studio, size and weight are less important than maximum height and stability. Features to look for include easy-to-use, quick-release adjustments, multiple leg segments for greater adjustability and the option to splay the legs to get close to the ground when photographing babies. A geared center column is also a nice feature, as you can smoothly adjust precise height.

HEAD WITH QUICK RELEASE

For portraiture work, we like a ballhead for its quick, multidirectional adjustability. One key feature to look for is a built-in level so you can be sure your composition is straight. This, along with your tripod, is an important investment in quality. Don't be frugal here—get a professional-quality ballhead that can support considerably more weight than you plan to mount on it and that can be locked down to ensure no movement.

You're going to want to shoot on a tripod basically all of the time, but occasionally, you might want to come off the tripod for a few shots to explore angles or work with a particularly animated subject. That's when a quick-release design is another nice feature to have when selecting a ballhead.

Manfrotto's professional 058B Triaut tripod is ideal for studio use, with its sturdy aluminum and steel construction and geared center column for precise height adjustments.

The BH-55 full-sized ballhead from Really Right Stuff can support a load of up to 50 pounds, incorporates a high-visibility bull's-eye spirit level and features a large locking knob for quick, intuitive adjustment.

Savage Universal offers a wide variety of backdrops, from traditional neutral tones to more contemporary, stylistic patterns like their Baby Blue Retro Muslin.

SEATING & FURNITURE

At a minimum, you need at least one adjustable-height stool. This can suffice even for couple or group shots by seating one person and posing others around him or her. More than one stool is obviously better, though, and if you really want to get creative, visit your local secondhand store or raid grandmom's attic and collect a variety of chairs in different styles and sizes. Unique chairs not only provide a functional place for subjects to pose, they can bring personality to the shot, especially when combined with complementary backdrops and

props. Over time, you might also collect a few end tables and quirky lamps to further dress your set—and add an additional light source.

The Complete Posing Kit from Savage Universal includes an adjustable posing stool and table, as well as a tabletop reflector set with both gold and silver surfaces.

GAFFER'S TAPE

Wherever you have cables running from lights, you have the potential for tripping and accidents that can damage gear, or worse, injure your client. Durable gaffer's tape or something similar can be used to secure cords to the floor so that no one trips. It also will look more neat and professional. I personally like Gorilla brand duct tape—it's sturdy and will stick firmly to just about any surface. It's also black, so it's visually unobtrusive and won't reflect stray light.

MODEL RELEASE

If you're planning to shoot portraits for commercial purposes, meaning to sell for stock or advertising use, you're definitely going to want a model release that defines your legal rights to use the image, but it's also a good idea for photographers who are doing portrait sittings for clients. It acts as a contract to set expectations for your client, and can be written to protect your right to use his or her portraits for the promotion of your studio through your website or advertisements you produce in the future. It may seem like a formality, but it's a worthwhile conversation starter to clarify image rights up front and to take into account potential privacy concerns of your clients when promoting your work online.

INSURANCE

This is another thing that might not be obvious, but it's important to talk to your insurance agent about the type of coverage you carry if you're going to be welcoming clients into your home studio. If you're operating as an official business entity, your business policy may already provide coverage, but if you're just getting started on a freelance or even a pro bono basis, talk to your insurer about liability coverage should someone get injured on your property, as well as coverage for your equipment. Better safe than sorry!

PPA

Professional Photographers of America offers numerous resources for pros, including a variety of insurance solutions and other valuable business resources, such as model releases, certification programs, networking and more.

BONUS GEAR: TOYS FOR KIDS

I can't count the number of times a sock puppet saved a portrait sitting. Cameras, lights and strangers can be really intimidating for children, and if they're cranky because they're hungry or have just woken up from a nap, a portrait sitting can be torture for everyone—not just the kids, but the parents and you, as well! Puppets let you be fun, lighten the mood and distract younger subjects from the camera. Toys can make a child more comfortable and can serve as props if you decide to keep them in the frame for a few shots. DP

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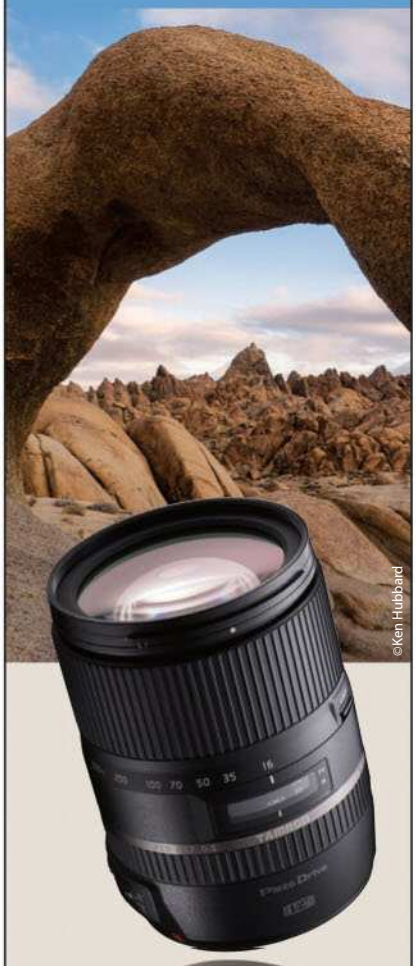

16-300mm
Di II VC PZD Macro

Tamron's 16-300mm Di II VC PZD Macro All-In-One™ zoom lens sets a new standard with its world's first 18.8X range that's perfect for travel photography. Advanced optical and mechanical design technology achieve high image quality in this incredibly compact and lightweight zoom that covers 16mm wide angle to 300mm telephoto plus close-up macro in just one lens. For Canon, Nikon and Sony DSLR cameras. Check the website for current rebate details.
www.tamron-usa.com

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STANDOUT FEATURE: New "selfie" features add flexibility to this tiny mirrorless camera.

1. The three-inch touch LCD flips up 180° for easy self-portraits. 2. The Fn1 button can provide one-touch connection to a smartphone via built-in WiFi. 3. A built-in, pop-up flash provides handy light for nearby subjects.

PANASONIC LUMIX DMC-GF7

Even smaller than its tiny GF6 predecessor at 4.2x2.6x1.3 inches and 11.9 ounces (with memory card, battery and 12-32mm kit zoom attached), the new LUMIX DMC-GF7 offers a host of features that makes it easy to take great selfies. The 3-inch, touch-screen LCD monitor tilts 180°, and when so positioned, puts the camera in Self Shot Mode, enabling a number of selfie functions. Face Shutter trips the shutter when you wave at the camera. Buddy Shutter trips the shutter when you bring two heads close together. Three Beauty functions produce more attractive selfies: Soft Skin, Slimming and Defocusing modes. And Jump Snap uses your smartphone's accelerometer to trip the shutter at the high point of a group jump. The camera's built-in WFi capabilities also make it easy to share images, and allow you to zoom, focus and fire the camera wirelessly via your smart device.

There's more to the GF7 than just selfies, of course. New sensor technology and Venus Engine processing get the most out of the 16-megapixel Micro Four Thirds image sensor. The Light Speed contrast AF system is very fast (camera and lens exchange signals at up to 240 fps), and the camera can shoot at 5 fps in AFC mode, 5.8 fps in AFS and 40 fps using the electronic shutter.

Video capabilities include 1080 full HD at 60p, 60i, 30p and 24p in AVCHD and 1080 60p and 30p in MP4, both with stereo sound. Touch AF makes it easy to do pro-style rack focusing.

Like all Micro Four Thirds System cameras, the GF7 can use all MFT lenses, along with pretty much any lens for which an adapter is available. Estimated Street Price: $599 (including 12-32mm kit zoom). DP

NIKON D5500

The fifth generation of Nikon's mid-line entry-level DSLR, the D5500 retains a lot of good stuff from its D5300 predecessor and adds some useful new features. There's still the 24.2-megapixel DX (APS-C) CMOS sensor with no anti-aliasing filter for maximum sharpness, 12- and 14-bit compressed NEF (RAW) capability and EXPEED 4 processing, but the normal ISO range is now 100-25,600 for both stills and video (25,600 was an expanded setting with the D5300, but not available for video). Maximum frame rate remains a respectable 5 fps, but you now can shoot more frames per burst. The 39-point AF system (with nine cross-type sensors in the center) remains the same. The D5500 adds Super Vivid, POP and Photo Illustration to the D5300's Effects modes.

Like the D5300, the new D5500 offers built-in WiFi for quick and easy sharing of images wirelessly via smartphone or tablet, and even remote operation of the camera via your smart device. The new camera lacks its predecessor's built-in GPS, but now provides 820 shots per charge on the same EN-EL14a battery (per CIPA standard), a 37% increase, perhaps, in part, because of that.

Video capabilities include 1080 full HD at 60p (also 30p and 24p), as well as 720p HD at 60 fps, with full-time contrast-based AF or manual focusing. You can record stereo sound via the built-in microphone or an optional external mic. The D5500 also offers interval timer exposure smoothing, and can shoot interval timer sequences of up to 9,999 frames.

Even more compact than its predecessor at 4.9x3.8x2.8 inches and 14.8 ounces, the D5500 likewise doesn't incorporate an AF motor, so can autofocus only with Nikkor lenses that have one (AF-S and AF-I). There's a full range of those, though, from a 10-24mm superwide zoom to an 800mm supertelephoto. Estimated Street Price: $899 (body only); $999 (with 18-55mm kit zoom). DP

STANDOUT FEATURE: A lighter body with a touch-screen vari-angle LCD monitor makes it easier than ever to shoot high-quality stills and video anywhere.

1. A new monocoque design provides an even smaller body that's some 2 ounces lighter than the D5300. 2. The 3.2-inch vari-angle LCD monitor now also offers touch-screen features, which makes odd-angle shooting even easier—just touch the subject on the LCD to focus and shoot. 3. The D5500 is also available in red.

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- Dual Pixel CMOS AF with Live View
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- Built-In Wireless Connectivity
- Full HD 1080p Video

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- Full-Frame CMOS Sensor • 3.0" LCD
- DIGIC 5+ Image Processor
- Uses Canon EF Lenses
- SD/SDHC/SDXC Card Slot
- Built-In Wi-Fi and GPS Connectivity
- Full HD 1080p with Manual Controls
- Built-In HDR and Multiple Exposure Modes

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Canon EOS-7D Mark II DSLR

- 3" Clear View II LCD • Native ISO 16000
- Dual Pixel CMOS AF with Live View
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- Full HD 1080p/60 Video — 20 Mega Pixels

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50/1.8 G AF-S (58ø) **216.95**
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60/2.8 G AF-S ED Micro (62ø) .....
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180/2.8 D ED-IF (72ø) .....
200/4 D ED-IF Micro w/Case (62ø) .....
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77/1.8 Limited (49ø) .....
100/2.8 D FA WR Macro (49ø) .....

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- Direct Compatibility with E-mount Lenses
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- Full 1080/60p with Uncompressed Output
- Built-In Wi-Fi and NFC • Direct Access Interface

Body Only *#SOA7B*
Kit with 28-70mm Lens *#SOA7KB*

24 Mega Pixels

Nikon 1 J4 Mirrorless System Camera

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- Full HD 1080p Video Recording at 60 fps
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- Nikon Inc. limited warranty included

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24 Mega Pixels

OLYMPUS OM-D E-M1 Mirrorless System Camera

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*#OLEM1**

16 Mega Pixels

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Body Only *#NID810*.....**3,296.95**

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R – Rear Slip-in Gelatin Filter Slot

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DG	28/1.8 EX DF Asph. Macro (77ø)	#SI2818M*	C, P, S, SA	449.00
DC	30/1.4 HSM (62ø)	#SI3014DCHSM*	C, N, S	499.00
DG	35/1.4 HSM (67ø)	#SI3514*	C, N, P, S, SA	899.00
DG	50/1.4 EX (77ø)	#SI5014*	C, N, S, SA	499.00
DG	50/2.8 EX Macro (55ø)	#SI5028MDG*	C, N, S, SA	369.00
DG	70/2.8 EX Macro (62ø)	#SI7028MDG*	C, N, P, S	499.00
DG	85/1.4 EX HSM (77ø)	#SI8514*	C, N, P, S, SA	969.00
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DG	150/2.8 EX APO Macro OS HSM (72ø)	#SI15028AMO*	C, N, P, S, SA	1,099.00
DG	300/2.8 APO EX HSM	#SI30028DG*	C, N, P, S, SA	3,399.00
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DC	17-70/2.8-4.0 OS Macro HSM (72ø)	#SI1770284DC*	C, N, P, S, SA	499.00
DC	18-200/3.5-6.3 OS Macro HSM (62ø)	#SI1820035D*	C, N, P, S, SA	399.00
DC	18-200/3.5-6.3 OS II HSM (72ø)	#SI1820035*	C, N, P, S, SA	499.00
DC	18-250/3.5-6.3 OS Macro HSM (62ø)	#SI1825035M*	C, N, P, S, SA	549.00
DG	24-70/2.8 EX IF HSM (82ø)	#SI247028*	C, N, P, S, SA	899.00
DC	50-150/2.8 EX APO OS HSM (77ø)	#SI5015028*	N	989.00
DG	50-500/4.5-6.3 APO OS HSM (95ø)	#SI50500*	C, N, P, S, SA	1,659.00
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Di-II	18-200/3.5-6.3 (62ø)	#TA1820035*	C, N, P, SA	—	199.00
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Di-II	18-270/3.5-6.3 VC PZD (62ø)	#TA18270*	C, N, SA	$50	399.00**
Di	24-70/2.8 VC USD (82ø)	#TA247028*	C, N, SA	$100	1,199.00**
Di	28-75/2.8 XR (67ø)	#TA287528*	C, N, P, SA	—	499.00
Di	28-300/3.5-6.3 XR LD (62ø)	#TA2830035XD*	C, P, SA	—	419.00
Di	28-300/3.5-6.3 VC PZD (67ø)	#TA2830035DI*	C, N, SA	—	849.00
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	1.4x SP AF Pro Teleconverter	#TA14XP*	C, N	—	224.00
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50/1.4 Carl Zeiss ZA (72ø).....**1,498.00**
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11-18/4.5-5.6 DT (77ø).....**798.00**
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16-50/2.8 DT (40.5ø).....**798.00**
16-80/3.5-4.5 DT (62ø).....**998.00**
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18-55/3.5-5.6 DT SAM II (55ø).....**218.00**
18-135/3.5-5.6 (62ø).....**498.00**
18-250/3.5-6.3 DT (62ø).....**648.00**
24-70/2.8 Carl Zeiss (77ø).....**1,998.00**
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Nikon

Nikon 1 Mirrorless Lenses

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18.5/1.8 .....**186.95** 11-27.5/3.5-5.6 AW .**146.95**
32/1.2 .....**896.95** 11-27.5/3.5-5.6...**186.95**
6.7-13/3.5-5.6 VR....**496.95** 30-110/3.8-5.6 VR...**246.95**
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SAMSUNG

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60/2.8 Macro ED OIS SSA..... **CALL**
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12-24/4-5.6 E..... **CALL** 18-200/3.5-6.3 ED OIS.. **CALL**
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SOFTWARE FOR PORTRAITS

FOCUSED TOOLS TO SIMPLIFY AND AUTOMATE THE FINE ART OF PORTRAIT RETOUCHING

BY WES PITTS

PortraitPro automatically detects 147 facial feature points and guides you through the process of fine-tuning their placement for precise enhancements. It also has no limit on the number of faces it can detect in an image.

ANTHROPICS PORTRAITPRO

One of the most popular portrait-focused applications, **PortraitPro** makes dramatic portrait enhancements (almost) completely automatic. Open your photo in PortraitPro, and the software identifies key facial features of your subjects, prompts you to select gender for each and adjusts its enhancements accordingly. After giving you the option to fine-tune its facial feature detection, the software smooths skin, removes blemishes, brightens eyes and teeth, and reshapes facial structures. It can even "relight" your subject for more pleasing highlights and shadows. All of these adjustments can then be manually controlled with simple sliders if you want to dial back or intensify the effects. PortraitPro can handle group portraits, too, allowing you to refine the look of each subject individually. Three editions are available: Standard is a standalone app, while the Studio and Studio Max versions also work as a plug-in for Photoshop and Lightroom. List Price: From $39 (Standard). **Contact:** Anthropics PortraitPro, portraitprofessional.com.

Perfectly Clear presents a very simplified, automated interface by default, but you can switch to manual controls over more than 20 individual adjustments to refine the look.

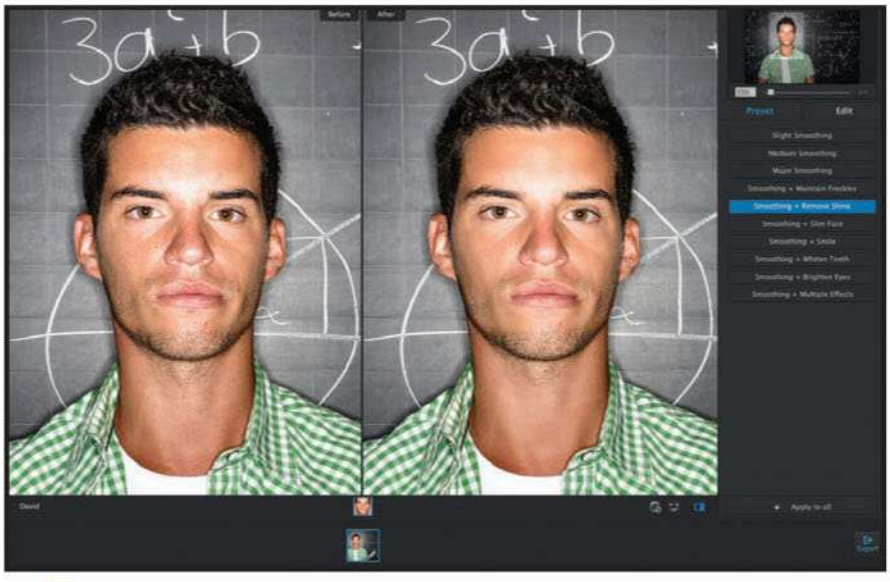
ATHENTECH PERFECTLY CLEAR PLUG-INS 2.0

Though not strictly a portrait processor, **Perfectly Clear 2.0** now includes the Beautify feature from the Perfectly Clear smartphone app. Upgraded for the desktop, Beautify makes 10 adjustments to your portraits, including basic enhancements like skin smoothing and shine removal to more dramatic changes like eye enlargement and face slimming. Beautify's facial detection techniques identify age, gender and prominent facial features to help automate the process. In addition to its portrait-enhancement ability, Perfectly Clear also offers tools to improve photos of any subject, such as exposure, color and dynamic range corrections, noise reduction and intelligent sharpening. Available as a plug-in for Photoshop and Lightroom; a stand-alone version is currently in beta. List Price: From $149. **Contact:** Athentech Imaging, athentech.com.

For some photographers, retouching portraits in Photoshop is part of the fun. For others, especially pros working through large image sets from multiple portrait sittings, retouching can become a grinding chore. If manual retouching sounds like all work and no play, consider investing in software that specializes in streamlining common portrait corrections.

These apps take the heavy lifting out of the process by automatically creating masks and offering preset corrections to simplify enhancements like skin smoothing—great for beginners, but helpful for even experienced Photoshop users who want to speed up their workflows. Batch processing and the ability to save custom presets can dramatically reduce turnaround time for busy portrait studios.

Whether you're a pro looking to expedite repetitive tasks, or a photographer who'd rather work with a camera than a keyboard, these applications will help you quickly create stunning portraits that your subjects will love. A downloadable demo version is available for each, so you can try before you buy.



ArcSoft Portrait+ initially presents 10 preset effect combos like "Smoothing + Whiten Teeth" and "Smoothing + Slim Face" for quick fixes, but you can always switch to a more detailed control panel to manage each effect manually.

ARCSOFT PORTRAIT+

Portrait+ 3.0 is another highly automated portrait retoucher that uses face-detection technology to identify up to 30 faces in a photo and set anchor points that target adjustments to key facial features. You can adjust these points for each individual in the photo. Ten presets range from light retouching and skin smoothing to more dramatic changes including face reshaping. Each of these presets can be edited to create your own presets by fine-tuning the effects via sliders. Batch processing lets you open a series of photos, which you can work on individually or apply your adjustments to all photos in the batch, speeding up retouching for multiple shots from a portrait session. Available as a stand-alone application or as a plug-in for Photoshop. List Price: $79 (plug-in); $179 (stand-alone). **Contact:** ArcSoft, arcsoft.com.

Beauty Box offers more than 30 preset effect combinations ranging from traditional portrait looks to more far-out effects that you might see used in advertising or graphic design.

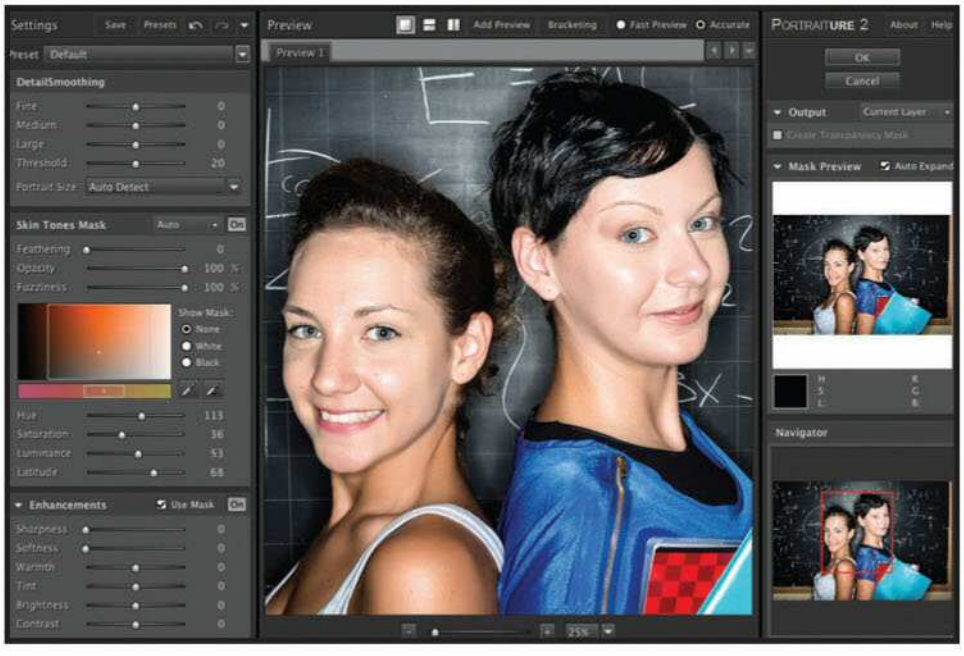
DIGITAL ANARCHY BEAUTY BOX PHOTO

In addition to powerful, automatic skin tone and texture corrections, **Beauty Box Photo** includes more than 30 preset styles from subdued to wild. Beauty Box does an excellent job of automatically masking skin tones, but if it misses, you can manually adjust the mask by simply clicking on your subject's skin. Slider controls let you refine the software's effects by choosing how much detail to retain, the intensity of sharpening and the amount of shine (hot spots) to smooth out. You can also adjust hue, saturation and brightness, either globally or by confining those adjustments to the mask area. Among the presets are color and exposure effects if you're looking to create a highly stylized portrait. Available as a plug-in for Photoshop and Aperture. List Price: $99. **Contact:** Digital Anarchy, digitalanarchy.com.

Beautune's workflow feels similar to creating your own video game avatar. You start with facial features like skin color, shape and smoothing, then move on to enhancing eyes, mouth and global effects like the background defocus and framing.

EVERIMAGING BEAUTUNE

Beautune takes a hands-on approach to portrait enhancement, similar to what you might do if manually retouching in Photoshop, but with tools specifically created for each step, organized into four categories—Face, Eyes, Mouth and Advanced—to keep the interface clean and suggest a workflow. Select an enhancement and "paint" the effect onto your subject. Most of the tools can be adjusted for both size and intensity of the effect. In addition to the typical portrait fixes like skin smoothing and blemish removal, there are makeup tools to add foundation, eyeliner and shadow, lip tint and more. The Advanced tools include a defocus brush for softening the background, photo frames and Instagram-like color-effect filters. List Price: $29. **Contact:** Everimaging, everimaging.com.



Portraiture includes a unique "Bracketing" feature that creates up to seven previews of any of 17 effects in steps, helping you to quickly dial in the strength of the effect to suit the image.

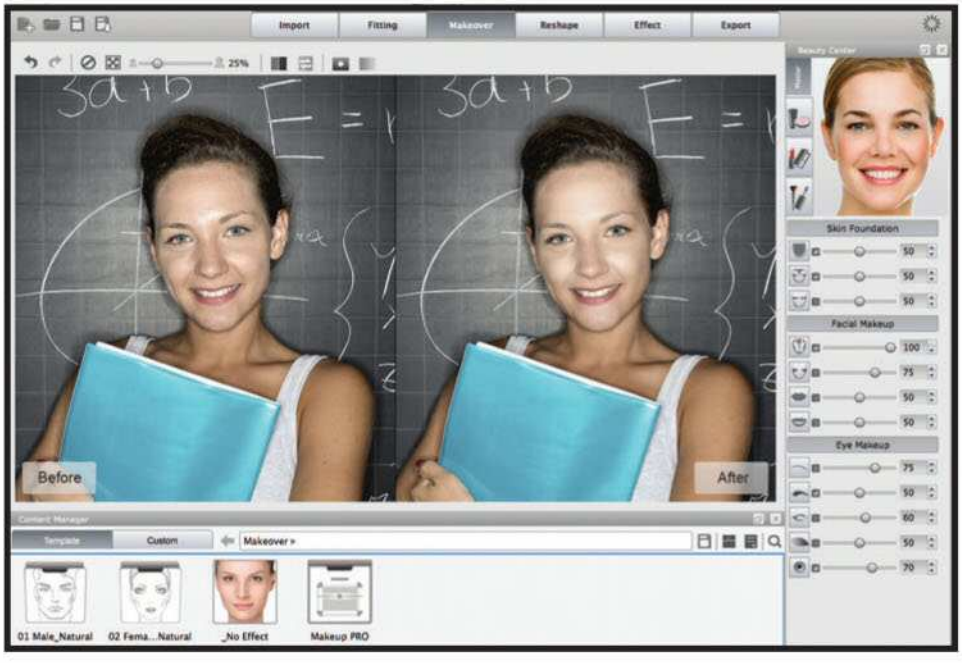
IMAGENOMIC PORTRAITURE

Rather than identifying facial features by shapes and anchor points, **Portraiture** creates a mask by examining color and isolating skin tone. You can adjust this mask manually by varying the color range, feathering, opacity and more. Compared to other automatic portrait enhancement software, Portraiture's effects are restrained. It's easy to go overboard with many portrait fixes, but even the strongest skin smoothing preset in Portraiture appeared subtle and natural, retaining some skin texture details. There are also presets for high-key and low-key looks. In addition to detail smoothing, you can apply sharpness, softness, warmth and other exposure corrections, either globally or to the skin tone mask areas only. Available as a plug-in for Photoshop, Lightroom and Aperture. List Price: $199. **Contact:** Imagenomic, imagenomic.com.

Perfect Portrait 9 (shown here as part of the Perfect Photo Suite) offers 15 key adjustments for skin, colors, eyes and mouth. There are also 12 preset "Looks" and you can also save your own presets.

ONONE PERFECT PORTRAIT 9

Available on its own or as part of onOne's Perfect Photo Suite 9, **Perfect Portrait** includes all of the essential tools you need to smoothen skin, reduce shine, add warmth, and brighten eyes and teeth. It also incorporates a smart retouching brush that makes it easy to quickly remove spot blemishes. Several presets are available, which you can adjust with slider controls to create your own. Perfect Portrait can identify multiple faces in an image to handle group portraits, and while it does a good job of identifying facial features automatically, you can easily adjust its masks. One especially nice feature is the option to save all adjustments to a duplicate layered Photoshop (PSD) file with Perfect Portrait's enhancements on their own layer, leaving your original untouched. List Price: $59 (Perfect Portrait 9); $149 (Perfect Photo Suite 9 Premium). **Contact:** onOne Software, ononesoftware.com.



FaceFilter3 PRO's toolkit is presented more like a makeup artist's than a photographer's, with enhancements like "blushes" and "eye shadows." The workflow steps take you through import to "makeover" to facial reshaping and finally global enhancements like vignette and exposure.

REALLUSION FACEFILTER3 PRO

FaceFilter3 PRO is another app that uses face detection to identify where to mask adjustments. When you import an image, the software automatically detects features, then walks you through adjusting its selections for eyes, nose, mouth and facial contour. The software's workflow is divided into six steps. After importing and adjusting the face-detection anchors, you progress through adjustments that add "Makeover" effects, such as applying skin foundation and eye makeup. Next, you move on to face reshaping, if desired, then on to global image effects like adding a vignette, adjusting color balance and similar exposure settings. The final step gives you the option to export as a JPEG or TIFF with selected enhancements applied. List Price: $79. **Contact:** Reallusion, reallusion.com.

Create An Out-Of-This-World Image

GO FROM AVERAGE TO AWESOME IN JUST A FEW MINUTES | BY RICK SAMMON

If you're like most photographers, you go to popular locations and attend popular events to make pictures. Not surprisingly, your straight-out-of-the-camera shots may look similar to those of your photographer buddies. Happens to me all the time.

A quick fix is to use digital darkroom enhancement to remove or alter the reality from the scene. In some cases, the more reality you remove or alter, the more your pictures may stand out from the pack.

In this installment of Quick Fix, I'll share with you a few techniques for creating an out-of-this-world image—an image that looks as though it were taken in outer space. I'll use a picture taken at a motocross event, but you can try my suggestions on your images that have dark backgrounds. The darker the background, the better.

Before proceeding, here are some basic action photography tips that I followed at the motocross event:

1. If you want to stop the action, shoot at a shutter speed of at least 1/1000th of a second.

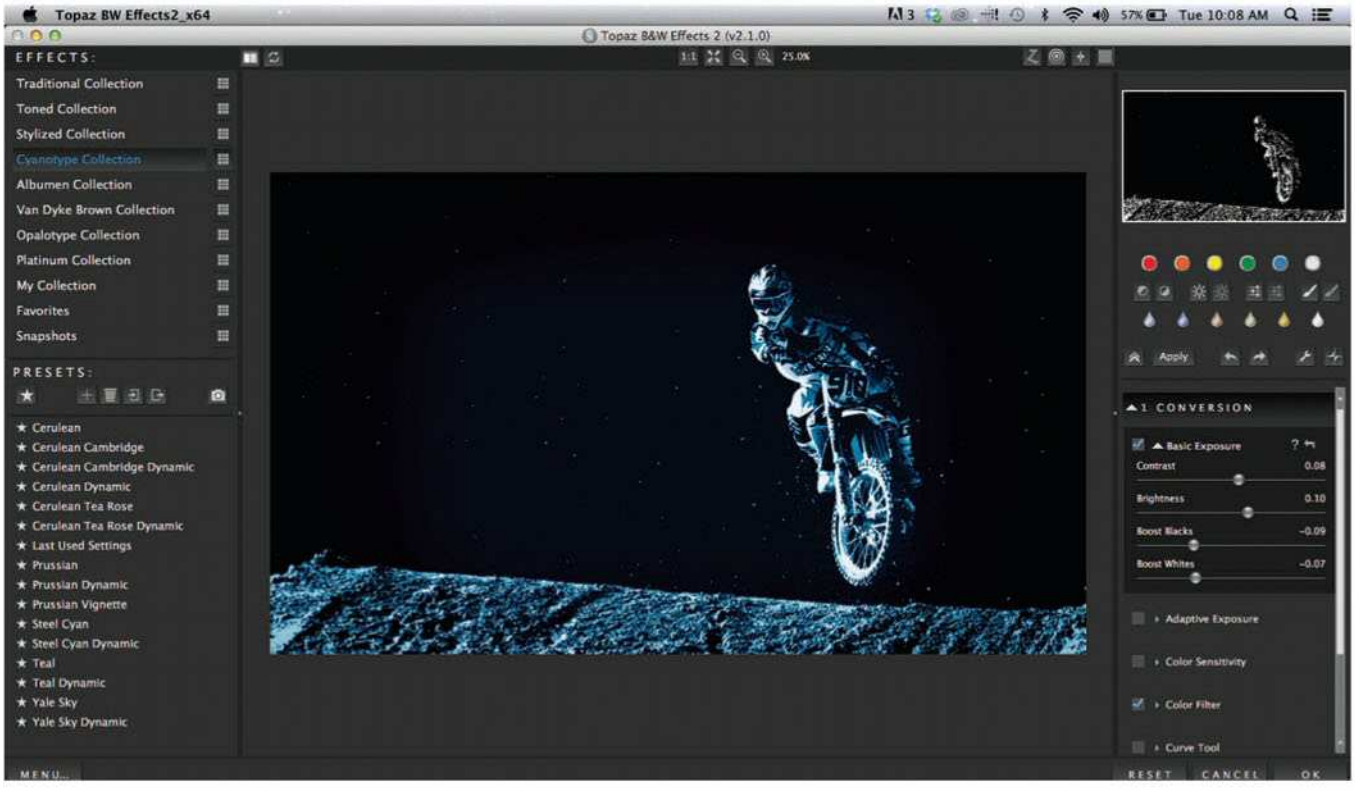
2. Choose a shooting location so you have a good background, and know that you can darken, lighten or blur the background easily in Photoshop or Lightroom.

3. Set your exposure on the subject, making sure the highlights aren't overexposed and washed out, which can easily happen if the background is darker than the subject.

4. For a sharp shot, use the focus-tracking feature on your camera to track the fast-moving subject right up to the moment of exposure.

ORIGINAL

Here's the original file from which I created the opening image for this column. The rider looks cool, but the overall picture is boring and cluttered.



Here, I saved the image and then opened it in another plug-in, Topaz B&W Effects. Another happy accident: I applied the Cyanotype filter, and now my image looked as though it were taken in the cool light of the moon. Here, too, I experimented with the options on the right to fine-tune my image.

My first step was to crop the image. Cropping gives us a second chance at composition, so it's a good idea to consider cropping as a first enhancement step. In my crop, I placed the subject off-center because a dead-center subject often makes for a deadly photograph. When you place the subject off-center in the frame, the person looking at your picture looks around the frame to see what else is happening. When you place the subject in the center of the frame, the viewer's eye could get stuck on the subject. That said, I've been known to break that rule of composition.

My second step was to experiment with different plug-ins and their effects and filters. Sometimes, we know which effect may look good when it's applied to an image, but at other times, we don't know and can't accurately envision the end result. That's what happened in this case.

I opened Nik Color Efex Pro (just one of the plug-ins that I use) and, starting at the top of the Nik preset window and working my way down, I just clicked on each filter, hoping to find one for this image that I liked.

I really liked the effect when I clicked on the Infrared filter. My shot looked as though it were taken on the surface of the moon or perhaps on a distant planet. So, yes, my end-result image is somewhat of a lucky accident.

Here's a quick tip on using plug-ins: After clicking on a preset (on the left in my screenshot), play around with the options (on the right) to see how you can fine-tune your image and create a one-of-a-kind effect.

I increased the contrast (which darkened the background and lightened the subject) of my image to make the motocross rider stand out from the background.

I liked the black-and-white infrared effect, but as usual, I always like to keep playing around with plug-ins in the digital darkroom.

The idea here, my friends: **Stop. Think. Experiment.** Go from plug-in to plug-in, and keep on playing with and thinking about digital darkroom effects. Let your imagination run wild. Most important: Have fun!

I used Photoshop's Lens Flare (Filter > Render > Lens Flare) filter to add the star effect to my image. When using this filter, you can adjust the type and intensity of the lens flare. You can also place the lens flare anywhere in your image.

Okay, now it's up to you to create cool images from the photographs that you take on your camera club's field trips and on your photo workshops. Keep in mind that the more you experiment, the more familiar you'll become with digital darkroom effects. DP

RICK SAMMON *is a longtime friend of this magazine. See more of his work at* ***ricksammon.com****.*

PAULY PHOLWISES

Eli

"This shot is very cool because it turned out exactly as I had in mind," says Pauly Pholwises, whose photo "Eli" is a finalist in our 8th Annual Your Best Shot photo contest. "I really wanted this photo to have that old-time, Western feel to it. The model actually brought the wardrobe, and it was perfect for the concept, as well. We didn't plan to shoot at this location—we were just walking around and came across this shop. I knew right away this would be a great location to shoot. The light was coming in from the door to his right and lit the room perfectly. This shot was all-natural light! I guess we were in the right place and at the right time." *Canon EOS 6D, Canon 35mm f/2*

See more of Pholwises' work at **www.paulypphotography.com**.

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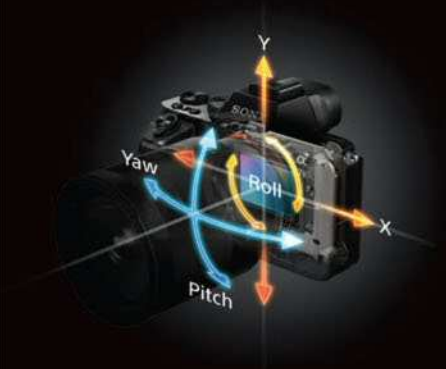

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